Karl Löwith

# My Life in Germany Before and After 1933

*A Report*

Translated by Elizabeth King

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# *Foreword*

It was an external inducement that prompted Karl Löwith to write his life history of 1940. Harvard University instigated a competition in order to collect reports by eyewitnesses about their experience of Germany before and after 1933. To date we have no information about the course of the proceedings and the whereabouts of the submissions. In any case, Löwith did not win a prize, and that comes as no surprise since 'philosophical reflections on the past' were not invited. Now, Löwith neither wrote a philosophical autobiography, nor did he dwell on general reflections in the form of a cultural critique, but the report flows naturally from his distinctive style of writing. It is the style of writing of a philosopher who had completed a study of biology; the sobriety and conciseness of a microscopical viewpoint is combined with the immediacy and clarity of phenomenological description.

We are therefore not talking about retrospective memoirs as they are published today, which seek to rescue something from the past in so far as that is possible – or impossible. Rather we are looking at a provisional appraisal, written down in Japanese exile – a respite which still bears witness to his immediate involvement from which Löwith tries to extricate himself by the inexorable consistency of his thought. It is a dramatic document, one which is not artistically composed down to the last detail, but one which sets out again and again with the spontaneity of the diarist. It is a document that lets many a letter speak, and in which some high-handed printed contributions by National Socialists are inserted. These had been collected by Löwith with an alert curiosity, repressed anger and growing contempt. It is a document in which the traces of incommunicable experience are noted down. In this resides its unsurpassable actuality.

The structure alternates between the chronological and the factual. Therewith the dual approach becomes clear, and two levels

are outlined. On the one hand, personal experiences are reported pointing towards or back to the turning point of 1933. On the other hand, the experiences, the challenges of contemporary history, are reflected in so far as they encroached upon the life of the author and compelled a reaction from him.

His biography starts in a seemingly ordinary fashion, like that of many another German youth who is moved by the spirit of the youth movement, but born into the respectable family of an artist. His father had been a secular Jew from Moravia, whose fatherland had become Germany and his home Munich, where he achieved a highly respected position as a painter. This is followed by Löwith's voluntary joining of the army, his service on the front in the regiment of Ritter von Epp, his serious wounding and captivity in Italy, his return to Munich, his encounter with Max Weber, his studies under Husserl and Heidegger, his habilitation* at Marburg University and his successful teaching career – until the year 1933. Thus far it is like reading a well written biography, though one that is framed by the German educated bourgeoisie, both well read and financially secure.

In 1933 follows his ostracism as a Jew, which is not altogether surprising, but something that cuts all the threads of his middle-class existence – apparently delayed due to his war service. This was in reality even more humiliating – as though the war service represented an academic qualification which Löwith, being a Jew, was denied. From 1933 Löwith was forced to consider alternatives that he had not sought: to be a Jew, to give up his university post, to escape to Italy as an exile rather than an emigrant. The expiry of his Rockefeller grant led him to search for work in the remaining parts of the world. Finally, shortly before he faced renewed expulsion owing to the Italian race laws, his timely move to Sendai, where Japanese students and friends had managed to secure him a professorship, despite all the objections raised by the German Foreign Office. The report ends before the final, equally timely, flight to the United States; Löwith and his wife were able to escape just before Pearl Harbor.

The external life history of a hunted person, who by nature is more attuned to contemplation, is gruelling enough to appeal to

*Postdoctoral university teaching qualification.

and engage the reader. But the real challenge lies in the reflections that Löwith casually notes. These can no longer be summarized, because they are interwoven with the unique situation from which they spring.

The biographical stages are mostly marked by the people whom Löwith met, found himself with or had to deal with. He is a master of the brief portrait, psychological and physiognomic, spiced with anecdotes, conversations whose specific contexts are no longer recoverable, and laconic commentaries whose conciseness cannot be surpassed. Löwith writes in a Tacitean style. Here we find character portraits of Max Weber, Albert Schweitzer, Rudolf von Bultmann or of Carl Schmitt, just to mention four extremes, whom Löwith did not meet by sheer coincidence. Here above all we find the autobiographical genesis of his critique of Heidegger which appeared later (1953) in *Denker in dürftiger Zeit*. The unmistakable appreciation of and decided distancing from his teacher Heidegger add up to a puzzle, which cannot be solved in purely psychological, sociological or philosophical terms, as there is always one aspect from each different perspective that cannot be seen. Löwith sheds light into every corner, sincere in his gratitude but not wavering because of it.

This unique personal report finally gains an exemplary quality when the sequence of events before and after Hitler's seizure of power is described with that straightforward clear-sightedness which Löwith had retained. His political semantics still betray his biographical proximity and entanglement, the – past – actuality of the creeping and open terror with which Löwith deals in a cool, calm manner, even if occasionally a provoked anger and loathing breaks out, like a last stand to protect him from the clutches of National Socialist Germans.

The stages of a life journey that was forced upon Löwith demonstrate by negation the history of the German plight, of the absurdity, ambition, opportunism and adaptation, the cowardice and fanaticism, all of which mutually propped up and heightened each other. The National Socialist one-party state with its baseness and absurdities, and its well-organized crimes, proves itself to be a precondition as well as a result of modes of conduct, which Löwith accurately registers – embarrassingly for us Germans. Most of the

time these observations make any commentary unnecessary; occasionally they are sketched with the pen of the great moralist. The rare observations of spirit and *Zivilcourage* are carefully recorded, but they too make it clear where they run aground and go to waste, how they are stifled and pushed back into the private sphere.

What is beyond the normal powers of the imagination, what has become possible only since 1933, is demonstrated by the stages of a life – seen in retrospect as having taken a comparatively gentle course – about which Löwith reports because they affected him and his wife: the Jewish laws, 'the political zoology of racial percentages' which turned his Protestant marriage into what was called a 'mixed marriage'; additionally, the arbitrary application of the Jewish laws, the withdrawal of his salary and war pension – while at the same time he was given a war decoration in Rome; the freezing of his savings, the non-admittance of Jews in hotels, the spying on them and denunciation; the obligation to suppress the truth, having a ban imposed by publishers, the banning of books, that is, being compelled to keep quiet, amounting almost to a loss of the German language as a public means of communication – all these stages, as absurd and banal as they are dreadful and paralysing, are presented in minute detail. At the same time the reader must not forget that the systematic annihilation of Jews is still ahead of the period covered by this report, even though concentration camps were already part of common knowledge.

The lost homeland grows mute because censorship no longer permits certain questions to be asked. But his departure, undertaken as a conscious political act, cannot succeed because the threatening shadow of the National Socialist regime increasingly descends on the exiles even in Italy and Japan. But Löwith does not utter a word of fear. Thus Löwith was, as I mentioned before, pushed from one alternative into the other without ever having sought it himself.

There are two major themes upon which he reflects again and again in the context of all the separate stories: the decline of the German bourgeois world and the externally imposed division of his existence into that of a German and a Jew. Both of these themes are directly interlinked. They give shape to the entire report.

The year 1933 is experienced as a major decisive event, as a

turning point. This is not due only to his personal discrimination as a 'Jew', but is equally a result of a long period of bourgeois decadence which, shaken by war and inflation, fell victim to a self-destruction from which there seemed to be no escape. Such testimonials can hardly be underestimated today. Indeed, Löwith leaves no doubt that he, who had seen himself as apolitical before 1933, and had lived accordingly, was involved in the common critique of education, in the intellectual dissolution of Christianity and humanism, albeit only as a historically aware philosopher, as a consistent analyst of this process. But that the path was to lead not only from Hegel via Marx to Nietzsche, but equally onward to Jacob Burckhardt, was already hinted at in his intellectual biography of the 1920s. However, this conscious existential turning point came about only under the spell of National Socialist terror, which Löwith understands as a consequence of German history.

Löwith openly admitted that there would be no return: either to Christianity, probably in defiance against the new German paganism; or to Judaism, from which he knew himself to be emancipated; or even to the classical new humanism, to 'Goethe'. And Löwith never accepted that he should have to 'acknowledge' the alternative he was forced into. This would have amounted to a seemingly voluntary, *de facto* constrained, political choice which would have made him lose his historically reflected identity as a philosopher. Thus Löwith found himself forced on to a path on which only he himself could hold his own, and that with dignity, even though he would have rejected this expression as melodramatic. It was the philosophical historian's path towards consistent scepticism, and it was the path of the philosopher reflecting on history towards a view of the world which precedes all history.

Thus Löwith felt paradoxically forced to preserve a tradition whose questionability he had come to realize, but whose factual opposite – in its results – was barbarism. The adherence to what was no longer recoverable did not, however, drive him to despair; rather, it strengthened that rigorous doubt which knows itself to be superior to all history and all events. It would be ideologically arrogant and philosophically inadequate to explain the standpoint of consistent scepticism he eventually gained in simple social or political-biographical terms. The present report demonstrates this.

Löwith's immunity to any slogan, which facilitates his dry critique of ideology, characterized the course of his life from the First World War onwards. His rejection of any rash or seemingly final solution implies a thought-out political position which he could no longer activate in Germany after 1933, since he was branded as a Jewish enemy. Finally, he gained a position in and through his scepticism which forbade him to make any false concessions.

The historically determined emergence and the philosophically genuine conviction of that scepticism which Löwith was to personify in his Heidelberg chair become vividly comprehensible through this life history.

His distance allowed him to detect even those nuances surfacing somewhat among German nationalist and even National Socialist Jews. They seem as ridiculous as those Jews who challenged him to make anti-Semitic remarks, although in each case the bitter hopelessness of the situation offered an explanation, but not the semblance of an apology. He also knows how to distinguish between the sincere SS student who thanks him on his departure from Marburg, and those types of people who climb without a Party card because they adapt prematurely – although both appeal to a German destiny which provided no explanation but only the semblance of a reason.

Löwith remains sceptical of all national stereotypes. But as a moralist who has also followed the trail of the French and Nietzsche, he risks brilliant generalizations – as, for example, in comparing Italians and Germans. They cannot but be true because of their one-sidedness: true in the sense of ethics rather than bare facticity. Oppressive as the report seems, it is also a critical pleasure to read.

The publisher's editor abbreviated this present (German) edition by a few sentences without destroying the meaning or context. The use of names with initials was retained where Löwith employed them – a style of writing which was characteristic in the times reported here. Thus names reduced to initials congeal, so to speak, types or role-bearers whose multitude or variants the reader can project. Löwith did not want to denounce, but to demonstrate. The only names spelt out were the names of well-known figures of contemporary history, from politics and science, to Spranger, whose

opposition and phlegmatically foolish lectures in Japan Löwith knows how to reduce to their lowest common denominator. Finally, friends are given their full names, since Löwith did not have to be afraid of identifying them.

Löwith obviously did not plan to publish this report on his return. In the text he sides with Burckhardt on the 'statute of limitations . . . which would make its decision not after mere years but according to the depth of the schism'. This was written before the annihilation of the Jews became known – for whom, literally, there cannot be any such limitation. That all the befores and afters of history dwindle in view of the world and eternity forms a part of the answers that Löwith also formulated in his Vita of 1959. This Vita, presented at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, has been included. It provides proof of an amazing continuity in a fundamental philosophical position which, strengthened by terror and exile, knows itself equal and superior to it. This makes Löwith's life history both memorable and notable.

*Reinhart Koselleck,*
*New York,*
*March 1986*

# *Translator's Note on the Abbreviation of Names*

Löwith's use of abbreviations for names has been retained throughout the book, except for those of well-known scholars and other personalities of the period, whose names are published in full.

# *Introduction*

The division of European history into 'before' and 'after' Christ still dominates the calendar in Germany, but no longer the mind. The dictatorships emerging from the World War laid claim to dating the whole of history in a new way, just as the French Revolution had done. And indeed, it cannot be denied that everything is different from the way it was before. The fact of this change cannot be disputed by anyone in Germany: both Hitler's followers and his opponents who have been condemned to silence agree with one another on this point. As someone recently wrote to me from Germany, many things are 'simply lost'.

The following records are meant to provide various materials to illustrate this 'upheaval'. They are based exclusively on the recollection of my experiences, as well as letters and other authentic documents, which I have collected since 1933 in their inevitably incomplete and random form. Measured against the official reports of the Nuremberg Party Assembly, or even the unofficial ones about the concentration camps, the words and actions which affected me personally are as unimportant as the fate of a German university lecturer can be when compared with a total and systematic revolution. The advantage in this absence of extreme events resides in the fact that they give no more and no less than an everyday picture of what really happened in the limited environment of an apolitical individual.

They can no longer be truthful in *one* thing – namely, in their tone. Memory has the power to transform even the most bitter experiences, and what one recounts after an interval of six years has become the property of one's life, which moderates and submerges the original pain of the loss one has suffered. On the other hand, the events are none the less vivid enough to give one the capacity somehow to characterize the people who have been part of them, which shows that even today they still concern one more than one

would wish. I would not have dreamed of softening the severity of the judgement resulting from this proximity.

*Karl Löwith*
*Sendai University (Japan)*
*14 January 1940*

# *1914–33*

## *War and Captivity*

The German revolution of 1933 began with the outbreak of the (First) World War. The events in Germany since 1933 have been an attempt to win the war which was lost. The Third Reich is the Bismarckian Reich to the second power, and 'Hitlerism' is an intensified form of 'Wilhelmism', in between which the Weimar Republic was a mere interlude. Whilst I sat in a Munich café during the early years of the revolution, SA [*Sturmabteilung*] men would hawk pictures of Frederick the Great, Bismarck and Hitler. The accompanying commentary explained that the liberator of Germany was finishing what the other two had begun. This correctly described the course of German development, and yet it was simultaneously a caricature if one thinks of the decline in this 'progress': from Frederick's correspondence with Voltaire via Bismarck's *Memoirs* to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The scepticism of the Prussian king gave way to the 'blood and iron' slogan of the 1870s, to be superseded by the stupefyingly repetitious clichés of a dictatorial demagoguery.

When the war took me by surprise during our summer vacation at Lake Starnberg, I was a student of seventeen in my penultimate year at a high school [*Realgymnasium*] in Munich. In October 1914 I volunteered to join the army. After just three months I completed my training as infantryman, and shortly before Christmas I arrived with a reserve battalion on the French front where we took up position near Péronne.

The yearning to escape from the bourgeois narrowness of school and home, the feeling of being at odds with myself after the break-up of my first friendship, the passion for 'living dangerously', which Nietzsche had instilled in us, the desire to throw ourselves into adventure and to test ourselves, and not least the easing of the burden of one's own existence by participating in the wider

universe, of which Schopenhauer had made us conscious – these and similar motives caused me to welcome the war as an opportunity to live and die more intensely.

The parade drill at the *Türkenkaserne* (Turkish barracks) of the Bavarian infantry corps regiment succeeded with its deliberate brutality, particularly its treatment of volunteers, in making everyone consider the day of transfer to the front a relief. I was assigned to the 8th regiment. My commanding officer was Baron von Krauss, and the battalion was led by Ritter von Epp, who was appointed National Socialist governor of Bavaria in 1933. The winter trench warfare was extremely gruelling because of the continuous struggle with the mud and wet conditions in the trenches. As young, free and single volunteers we were better able to cope with it than other soldiers, especially the territorial reservists, who kept worrying about their families. A foray at night to the French trenches, which were only 50 metres away from ours, earned me my first promotion. I am still in possession of the three fragments of the tricolour flag I had captured on that occasion. I sent them to my father for his birthday, and he had them framed.

I served under Captain von Krauss, a distinguished monocled gentleman who was nicknamed 'Caruso' by the soldiers because of his operatic airs. He was quite adept at commanding, and felt quite content to be a professional soldier. My school and regimental friend, the officer cadet von Lossow, had pointed me out to him, so he occasionally spared me from regular duties, one of which was to write the regimental report in the officers' dug-out. One day after the war I met von Krauss, no longer wearing his splendid uniform but a well-worn coat, in the streets of Munich. He approached me and mentioned that he was employed by an art export dealer. My friend von Lossow worked in the editorial office of the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* after the war. Later he took up industrial espionage abroad and eventually landed a job in heavy industry. This was a career pattern that many professional officers shared.

In May 1915, after Italy declared war on Austria, my regiment was transferred to the German Alpine Corps on the Austro-Italian frontier. I was able to see my parents again for a few hours during a stopover at Kleineiting. A savagely gruelling drill in Bruneck, for

a parade march before the Austrian Emperor Karl, turned the final days before we were sent to the Dolomites into a misery. We were supposed to move into position at an altitude of 2000 metres. We were loaded up like mules: a knapsack weighing 20 kilos, a gun weighing 4 kilos, with double munitions, and two blankets strapped on to the knapsack. When we arrived late at night at the Praxer Wildsee, dripping with perspiration, we bathed in the ice-cold water of this mountain lake. None of us caught pneumonia, as we might have done in normal times. The men were more robust than the animals carrying our cooking equipment, which were frequently unable to continue. I was assigned a contingent of thirty men. I had no difficulties in comradely dealings with these good and capable people, but I was reluctant to be in command of them. The primitive things soldiers share in army life (a soldier wit had daubed on the officers' latrine: 'Only officers shit here') had to bridge the gap between our different social origins and education. I never felt discriminated against on account of *race* by either the men or the officer corps during my entire life at the front.

We used our new telescopic rifles to shoot alternately at mountain goats and at Italians who carried their food over a bridge crossing the Travenanza stream to a field post at particular times of the day. My captain wanted to take prisoners to assess the enemy, and I volunteered to lead a three-man patrol. At night we descended into the steep valley and crossed the stream. Towards four o'clock in the morning the thick fog over the wood suddenly lifted, and we unexpectedly found ourselves directly confronted by an *Alpini* detachment consisting of about twenty men. An unnoticed retreat across the stream was impossible, so I took up a firing position behind a tree, signalled to my men, aimed and shot. An instant later I was hit in the chest by a breathtaking blow. The impact had thrown me face down, flat on the ground. A faint feeling of oozing blood and my incapability to raise myself from the ground with my hands made me realize in an instant that I was not able to get back, and would from now on be in the hands of the enemy. It was only later, through letters, that I learnt of the fate of my three comrades: one of them had received a fatal shot-wound in the stomach as he fled, while the other two were killed on a second patrol the next day. Amongst the letters my father kept I found the report of

Soldier F., in which he describes to my parents the 'heroic' death of their son. His highly fanciful, embroidered and sentimental report does not contain *one* word of truth, merely newspaper clichés. However, I am none the less convinced that he himself believed every word of it.

At the time of my injury and the realization of my situation, the trivial thought crossed my mind: 'What a shame about the beautiful parcel!' I had received it the previous day from home; and it contained excellent cigarettes, which were now gone for ever. I then lost consciousness and came to on a stretcher in the ghostly flickering light of a gloomy dugout, where a doctor was attending to me in a kindly manner, while a young interpreter took charge of my few belongings. In the night, four soldiers carried me on a stretcher over the mountains to the next position, a journey taking many hours. After a subsequent journey in a lorry loaded with roof-tiles, which shook me up terribly, I arrived more dead than alive at the nearest field hospital. Two months on the border between life and death ensued. Hospital assistants, whose language I did not understand, came now and then to attend to me, but it was only with a Catholic priest that I managed somehow to communicate in Latin.

During the second month one bright day interrupted the loneliness of my bed-ridden existence, which varied only in levels of pain: my father's love and energy had achieved the miracle of being allowed to visit his only son (my sister died at the early age of sixteen in 1908) for a few hours in enemy territory. (At that time Italy was at war only with Austria, not yet with Germany, although German troops fought on the Austrian front from the outset.) After eight months in a sickbed I was transferred to an Austrian prisoner-of-war camp, a small fortress overlooking the beach at Finalmarina, where I gradually recovered, although the injury incurred on the lobe of my lung healed so badly that it remained useless for ever after. I later received a casualty decoration and a state allowance of 19 Reichsmarks per month. And later still – after November 1938, the date of the temporary lull in the anti-Jewish pogroms – these allowances were withheld by the state to meet the 20 per cent tax levied on Jewish wealth – as an 'atonement' for the Paris assassination attempt carried out by a Pole.

## *Nietzsche before and after Hitler*

Finalmarina, a charming fishing village on the Riviera, had an additional attraction for me: it was close to Porto Maurizio, where the friend of my (now past) youth had spent his summers before the war, and from where an impassioned correspondence to Lake Starnberg passed back and forth. His weekly letters contained lovely drawings, which captured the sometimes soft, sometimes severe contours of the Ligurian Mountains, on the peaks of which my friend spent the moonlit nights until dawn, experiencing the moods of Zarathustra with the unalloyed seriousness of an awakening German youth. At that time we were the best of friends and finding the path to our inner selves by way of Nietzsche. Already at school we had read *Zarathustra*, with wicked delight – particularly during Protestant religious instruction. My friend took the logical step even at that stage and his father (a highly educated major industrialist who later made financial contributions to Hitler's Party) supported him in this: he renounced the Protestant faith to become a member of the 'Non-denominational Congregation', which was headed by E. Horneffer, the Monist and Nietzsche scholar. Before the war his small congregation was a sect that was barely tolerated, but since then it has spread throughout Germany as the 'German Christians', a neo-pagan anti-Church movement.

I obtained my doctorate in 1923 with a thesis on Nietzsche. I also repeatedly lectured on Nietzsche between 1928 and 1934. In addition, I introduced Nietzsche as the 'philosopher of our time' at the Prague World Congress of Philosophy (1934), and finally proposed an interpretation of the central tenets of his teachings in a book in 1935. Even today, twenty-seven years after my first reading of *Zarathustra*, I would not know of anyone else with whom to conclude the history of German thought, although – thanks to the German revolution – I gained some perspective on why 'living dangerously' is such a risky undertaking. Nietzsche continues to be the epitome of German unreason, or what is called the German spirit. A gulf separates him from those who unscrupulously preach his message, yet he prepared the way for them that he himself did not follow. Even I cannot deny that the motto I wrote in my

war diary, 'Have the courage to live dangerously', leads in a roundabout and yet direct way from Nietzsche to Goebbels' heroic clichés about self-sacrifice.[1]

I still have a photograph of an exaggeratedly solemn self-portrait my friend made in 1913. To me it symbolizes our sense of togetherness in Nietzsche. The wilful – and, despite its youth, apparently pitiless – face is directly turned to the viewer; the right hand, raised above the naked shoulder, grips the hilt of a sword with the inscription 'Love and Will'. When I look at this photograph now, the historical connection with the German present is immediately apparent to me. Every magazine now carries many German faces like that. They are hardened to the point of rigidity, the lips pressed together and the features stretched like a mask to the limits of what is human.

Those who know Nietzsche's significance for Germany can easily find the bridge that spans the abyss between the 'before' and the 'after'. It is indeed impossible to understand the development of Germany without this last German philosopher. His influence within the boundaries of Germany was – and still is – boundless. The Anglo-Saxon world – even Italy and France, with d'Annunzio and Gide – will never be able fully to comprehend it, so essentially foreign to them is what draws Germans to Nietzsche. Like Luther, he is a specifically German phenomenon – radical and fatal.

It was not until the summer of 1934, by which time I was already an emigrant, that I came to know Zarathustra's landscape from my own experience. We spent the hot days in Pozzetto, near Rapallo, and there we walked along the enchantingly beautiful path between Ruta and Portofino. I had, however, had the first notion of the perfect beauty of the South during my captivity in Finalmarina and in the old fortresses above Genoa, through whose iron bars I could see the sun rise from the sea. There I experienced some of the happiest moments of my life, being completely at one with myself. It was also within the walls of one of these fortresses that I received some photographs from my friend in 1916, after a long silence. He was stationed with an anti-aircraft unit in the Vosges Mountains, and a meeting with our biology teacher Wimmer, whose favourite pupils we were, was the reason for his being reminded of the third member of our fellowship.

## *Austrians, Germans and Italians*

I spent the first year of captivity as the only German in a group of Austrians – that is, with that intermixture of peoples which the last old European dynasty had held together until 1918: with men from Linz, Vienna and Hungary, Czechoslovakia (most of the Czechs deserted and then fought against Austria), Croatia and Poland. The Viennese and Hungarians, in particular, knew how to make life easier whenever possible by engaging in activities such as social entertainment, drinking sessions, games and jokes, songs and music. The 'imperial and royal' lieutenants and cadets with whom I shared a room had their hair groomed by their orderlies for hours on end, and they never neglected to take good care of their outward appearance. Almost all of them had literary interests. An elegant navy officer, whose face was reminiscent of Oscar Wilde, introduced me to Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*; cadet K. and I had discussions about Feuerbach; lieutenant H. watched the Italian ladies on the beach below through his binoculars; captain L. filled the whitewashed walls with witty caricatures; and lieutenant N., who served a month's detention in Forte Maggiore for attempting to escape with me and seven other officers, filled the cracks in the walls of our cell with the remnants of the macaroni from our meal. All of them had some kind of individual talent and a traditional Austrian humanity, which brightened our cramped and hopeless confinement between the four bare walls of the fortress.

In 1917 I was transferred to a camp of German prisoners in Volterra, and from there to the fortress of Trebbio near Florence. The difference was striking: there was nothing of what I have described above among the all too efficient, organizing, pedantically correct and forever protesting Germans who rendered life in captivity more difficult with their highly inappropriate pretensions. I shared a room with lieutenants H. and Sch. One of them had been a county court judge in Rostock; the other was planning a habilitation in history. He was a fierce admirer of Bismarck and a racial historian in the mould of Schemann and Gobineau. If he felt that insufficient allowance was being made for his Prussian officer's dignity, he would draft long complaints, put on his helmet and pin on all his medals, and solemnly go to the Italian commander of our

camp, who would then promise to pass on his complaint and later throw it in the wastepaper bin. In reality there was very little cause for serious complaint, though this did not prevent me on one occasion from seeking the help of an Italian soldier on guard to send my own written complaint to the Swiss Embassy, which represented German interests during the war. This affair was discovered through the Embassy's written reply, and for that I received '*quindici aqua-pane*' – two weeks' solitary confinement on bread and water. Subsequently I was transferred to the above-mentioned prison fortress for another month.

The initially perceived humanity of the ordinary Italian people stood the test of time on this occasion: the non-commissioned officer in charge took the risk of slipping me a little bread and cheese at night. When one day, in the presence of the commander, he had to turn out my pockets and found prohibited cigarettes in one of them, he secretly hid them on his person in the twinkling of an eye, reported that everything was in order, and returned them to me with matches the following night. Two other stories will further illustrate how a kind of Christian humanity is inbred in the Italian. When I was back in Italy twenty years later, I met an old retired Italian gentleman at an inn. He explained to me that he was a general by profession, but 'actually' a pacifist, and that he was now devoting himself to reducing the number of road accidents, because it was a crying shame that every year thousands lost their life in this way. The second story deals with my experience on a Roman bus which drove at frantic speed through the narrowest of streets, giving pedestrians hardly a chance to get out of the way. An infuriated officer on the bus went up to the driver and shouted at him: '*Bisogna prendere le curve più cristianamente*' – that he should take the bends in a more Christian way, implying that he should take them less brutally. It is unthinkable that one would meet so civil a general in Germany, or hear a reprimand in this Christian form.

Despite all the suffering, my war imprisonment in Italy awakened my everlasting love for this country and its people. Even today, after eighteen years of fascist rule, people in Rome and in the tiniest village are much more *human* than those in the North. They have the gift of an indestructible sense of personal freedom, as well as an appreciation of human weaknesses which the German is seeking to eradicate.

## *The Reception Back Home*

After two years as a prisoner of war I was discharged, because of my injury, and sent back home in an exchange. The triumphant journey through Switzerland, where throughout the night friendly Swiss people overwhelmed us with food and presents at every station, was followed by disillusionment. I and another badly injured German had to leave my Austrian comrades in Salzburg, at the Bavarian border, to change to a German train. We reported to the station commander, an old major, who barely returned our greeting, but just gruffly asked for our 'papers' without the slightest trace of human interest in our state of health. It seemed as if the mere fact that we had returned alive from our captivity, instead of dying a heroic death, prejudiced him against us. The identity card from the Red Cross, which described our injuries, was not enough for him. He snarled at us, then reluctantly ordered us to the train on which we had to continue our journey. This was our reception back home after three years of 'war experience'! A similarly hurtful incident occurred on our arrival in Munich. Without consideration for our poor state of health after thirty hours of travel, we were kept standing for hours in the station building to settle the formalities, without ever being offered a chair. Our hope of being reunited, after three years' absence, with our parents, who were living in Munich, was cruelly dashed: we were ordered to report immediately to the barracks, and to spend the night there. Only on the following day were we given permission to go home for a few hours. A secondary period of convalescence in one of the 'iron lungs' at Reichenhall did not bring results; one of my lungs could not be reactivated. After two months I was discharged from military service, and began my studies. Before I go on to that, however, I want to follow up the story of my service at the front.

## *The 'Front Clause'*

The National Socialist takeover immediately brought into effect a law to 're-establish the German civil service', according to which all Jewish civil servants were to be dismissed, with the exception of

those who had fought in the war or attained civil servant status before 1914 (that is, not merely during the 'Weimar system'). Not a single Jewish member of my faculty[2] faced dismissal: the archaeologist Jacobsthal had been a full professor before 1914; the classical philologist Friedländer, the philosopher Frank, the scholar of Romance languages Auerbach, the art historian Krautheimer and myself – all of us had fought in the war. The only one who would have been affected was no longer alive: the Slavonic specialist Jacobsohn. In his despair he committed suicide by jumping under a train. The *Mitteilungen* of the University federation did not dare to publish a word of remembrance, and the newspaper glossed over it with a cynical remark.

The rest of us seemed legally secure at the time, and continued our lectures without experiencing students causing trouble as they did elsewhere. I considered my position to be still reasonably tenable at that time, although this first piece of legislation already prevented further promotion at German universities. The repeated assurance by the most senior leadership that Jewish ex-servicemen would retain their offices 'with full honours' was widely believed. While it is true that the newly elected chairman of the lecturers' association [*Dozentenschaftsführer*] wanted to prohibit my lectures during the first weeks after the revolution because he had heard that I was a 'Marxist' (in fact I had only written a critical appraisal that compared Max Weber and Karl Marx), he dropped his reservations when he learnt that I had been a wartime volunteer. *The 'front argument' was generally accepted, and this was matched by the matter-of-factness with which the dismissal and defamation of all other Jews was accepted*! It is also true that even colleagues held the most incredible opinions about the 'World Jewry' and its international networks, which would supposedly find a marvellous job abroad for every dismissed Jew. The chairman of the lecturers' association was absolutely amazed when I explained that as a Christian I no longer had the slightest connection with the Jewry, and that I considered the problems of life as an emigrant to be as considerable as those awaiting me in Germany.

A well-mannered young student in SS uniform (he came from an officer's family) who, even 'after Hitler', had no qualms about continuing to attend my lectures, had the courtesy to discuss openly his

position on the measures taken against Jews. He very much regretted the fact that under the new laws I should no longer be able to become a civil servant [*Beamter*]. He said that he too was indeed basically against Jews, but only against the 'Eastern Jews', whose influx during the war had been – it should be recalled – instigated by the German military command. He thought, in a quite liberal manner, that an exception should have been made for 'scholars'. This likeable youngster had a decided respect for me as a lecturer, but even more so as an ex-serviceman whose 'experience at the front' he was hoping to emulate. He envied me for it. In contrast to this, he saw the elimination of all those Jews who happened not to be protected by war service – because they were either too young or unfit for army service – as a matter which need not be discussed. Hitler and Rosenberg had been able to offer him conclusive proof that the Jew was the misfortune of Germany. When I saw him once more in 1935 (I had travelled to Marburg from Rome for a few days), I confronted him with the question of whether he believed that Rosenberg's *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* was compatible with serious philosophical study. At first he hesitated, then he candidly said no, in that he decided in favour of the 'myth'.

Later on I encountered exactly the same naive and thoughtless attitude with one of my best friends from the Freiburg student days. He had become a university lecturer, and in 1935 he came to Rome for a lecture. The 'front clause' had recently been abolished by the Nuremberg race laws and I had thus finally lost my livelihood in Germany. B. indeed regretted the personal injustice that had been done to me 'as an ex-serviceman'; he also cared little for the new cultural policy. But, like so many, he voluntarily abdicated his responsibility in favour of the younger generation, which was sure to purge the movement of its 'excessive elements'. He himself already felt too old (he was thirty four!) and unsuited to engage actively in such an undertaking, since educationally he belonged to that disappearing intellectual stratum that had neither brought about nor prevented the revolution. To my reply that what should matter to him was not what would become of the present 'Hitler Youth' in ten or twenty years' time, but what *he*, as an academic teacher, had to say to young people about such things, he had nothing further to add than to express an extremely general faith in

history. Beyond that he was merely concerned not to ruin his recently attained professorship through any carelessness.

He was truly astounded to hear me say that, with reference to the front clause, I would consider it not an honour but an ignominy to have to buy my human and civil rights with my wartime service, and that in my view my suitability as a university lecturer had nothing whatever to do with having worn a uniform. He could not in the least understand why I thought it absurd that I should be tolerated at university only because I had been a soldier in 1914. He did not in the least seem to consider it a problem that only my wartime service was to confirm my Germanness, as he so unquestioningly let himself be 'co-ordinated' [*gleichschalten*]*, and this even more so in that he was not in the least conscious of it.

His lack of understanding comes as a shock to me even to this day, because it demonstrated how hopeless it was to communicate even with those who believed themselves, by their indifference, to be superior to National Socialist propaganda. This same person who in our Freiburg student days had studied mathematics, music and philosophy, read Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard, and whose best friends had been a Jewish girl and I, had not the least scruple about showing complete indifference to the universal fate of the Jews, while letting pass only those exceptions which had been provisionally laid down by National Socialism. Like all somewhat embarrassed Germans, he soothed his bad conscience with the 'front clause', and was therefore most annoyed at its (subsequent) annulment.

I came across precisely the same way of thinking again four years later, in Japan. A young German missionary, who was skilfully steering his Christianity through the rocky political arena, visited me shortly after the 1938 pogrom. He treated it all like a mere trifle

*'Co-ordination' [*Gleichschaltung*] was the Nazi policy facilitated by the emergency decree following the burning down of the *Reichstag* in early 1933, and adopted to bring all areas of public life under Nazi control. During the period 1933–4 it deprived formerly autonomous/semi-autonomous German institutions, including *Länder* (German regional 'states'), trade unions, political parties, education, etc., of their constitutional rights and independence. This was effected by replacing Ministers and other senior figures in public office at regional level by Nazi appointees (most frequently *Gauleiters*), with the aim of subjugating the regions and their institutions to central Nazi government control. The process of 'co-ordination' was virtually complete by summer 1934.

that was none of his business. He had not even taken notice of the fact that German Jews were robbed of a fifth of their property. However, he was sensitive on *one* point: he protested loudly against the injustice (which he bombastically called 'metaphysical guilt') of these measures in a case like mine, that of an 'ex-serviceman'. The fact that thousands of German Jews, whether they had taken part in the war or not, were deprived of any means of income, were robbed of their savings, had their homes demolished and their reputation destroyed, that most of them were in concentration camps to defend their bare existence – all this did not move this Christian missionary in the slightest. Referring to Gogarten, he thought that it was really not possible to resolve the Jewish problem in a 'worldly' fashion, but ultimately only in a religious way through the Christianization of Jews. This is a viewpoint that is indeed as worthy of consideration as the opposite one held by orthodox Jews, but it cannot convince me so long as it is no more than a convenient apology for any worldly baseness.

After the abolition of the front clause I filed away my regimental certificate acknowledging my military commendations – as well as the honour of having belonged to the 'guard of honour' of Ritter von Epp. My final link with it during my stay in Japan consisted of a Mr St., the representative of the 8th regiment, calling on my mother to request money because he was persecuted by the Nazis and had to leave Germany!? In Rome in 1935 the German ambassador (von Hassell) presented me with the 'cross of honour for front fighters', originally awarded by von Hindenburg. The same week I received the laconic news from the Registrar of Marburg University that I was granted 'leave of absence' on account of the imminent new race laws. A little later followed the prohibition to wear a uniform and a law excluding Jews from the 'honour' of military service. When I emigrated I left my four war decorations with my mother because I did not set great store by them, while my mother was still attached to them with a kind of pride and affection. I recall with shame that in 1933, in the days when Jewish shops were boycotted, several Jewish shopowners were hanging their 'iron crosses' in their shop windows – both a bitter appeal to their fellow citizens and at the same time a reminder of their disgraceful conduct. This was my military career before and after Hitler.

Today I would not hesitate to offer both military and political services to Germany's enemies if need be, because the present Germany is the enemy of all humanity, and because it is determined to deny everything that makes our lives worthwhile. Neither the distress nor the death of Germans now embroiled in the war will make me feel pity at the consequences of a system that is devoid of pity on principle, and that simply tramples on the dignity of the human being.

## *After the War*

The war, which had entered its most terrible phase in 1918, was over for me personally in December 1917. Of my regiment, which had been transferred from Italy to Serbia and Romania and then to Verdun, there were, in the end, scarcely 200 men left alive – a fifteenth of the original strength when we set out for war. During the course of the war it had been brought up to strength more than a dozen times. Sergeant Streil, who was in command of the contingent in the West to which I was allocated in 1914–15, had fought with us on all these fronts for four years. He was wounded on three occasions, and was eventually hit six times by grenade splinters and bullets near Verdun. After the end of the war I visited him in his Munich flat, where he lived with his sister, who ran a small grocery shop. He was cheerful and civil, friendly and benevolent, as if he had never gone through the hell of Verdun. He had been promoted from the ranks of the common soldier to officer, and was awarded the gold medal for bravery. After the war he became a captain in the army. He was the best and kindest German I know from the war: he had a balanced sense of objectivity, never wasted unnecessary words, fulfilled his duties gladly, and was totally impartial in his treatment of the men. He was an ordinary man without ever being crude, and had a tough character with a sensitive poetic temperament. He distanced himself from the political intrigues of 1919 and 1933.

The majority of my schoolfellows were killed during the war; I saw only a few of them again. L. had a shorter leg due to injury. He had lost his childish enjoyment of commanding, and now devoted

himself to his prewar hobbies: to the collection of nice antiques, to an enjoyably sceptical idleness, to cookery and sailing, and to a charming Bavarian peasant girl whom he had brought from Dachau to live in his city flat. The life that had been interrupted by the war seemed once again to be taking its course – we were still too worn out to realize the full extent of the break with the prewar days, and all its consequences. Another schoolfellow, U., paraded up and down the streets with his '*Pour le Mérite*' medal. His cheeky boy's face had not changed at all after flying fighter planes for three years. He married a rich merchant's daughter and earned a fortune with foolhardy aerobatic and stunt flights. He was promoted to the rank of general when the air force was rebuilt. Since he had already spent most of his school days on first attempts to fly in the local meadow, he has brilliantly fulfilled his youthful ambitions and dreams.

However, the wish of my own youth was also approaching its fulfilment. I had started to read Schopenhauer, Kant and Schleiermacher's Plato when I was thirteen years old, and now I was able to study philosophy at university. The pinning of miniature flags on the wall-map of theatres of war I left to my patriotic father, who was saddened by his son's indifference. He never took any notice of the retreat of German troops when he was engaged in this. The miniature flags always stayed in the most advanced positions, and when the Western front collapsed, the war on the map seemed almost won. Shortly before that I accompanied my father to a lecture on the German war aims, given by Tirpitz. The grand plans of annexation and the double goatee of this Wilhelminian admiral repelled me, while my father was enthusiastic. There was an intense dispute between father and son, and a rift between the generations.

Ludendorff moved to Munich after the war, and appeared at university ceremonies among the guests of honour. I found his red butcher's face, with its brutal chin and hard eyes, repulsive even before I knew anything about his deluded military-theological system. I was more attracted to the haggard face and intellectual head of Colonel P., who had been on the general staff and was now sitting on the school bench in civilian attire, studying political economy under Max Weber and starting a new life. One saw him often among the left-radical Wyneken students who took a prominent position during the 1919 revolution, most of whom perished.

Some of them were able to escape in time. I acquired part of my philosophical library from the legacy of one of these students. In 1924 I encountered another of them again, now a bank clerk, in Rome. A leading figure of the time, the poet Ernst Toller, has recently put an end to his failed life in a New York hotel.

Neither can I forget the pale and contorted face of student T., from whom I still have a study on Hölderlin's insanity. At university he made fanatical speeches, in which his quotation from Zarathustra about the 'whitewashed graves' made the biggest impact. They were disparate students who had surfaced on the troubled waves of the general collapse, and had taken it upon themselves to assume the leadership during the few weeks of the Bavarian Soviet Republic. The Bavarian ruling house had fled overnight. Kurt Eisner had become Prime Minister, and the literary figure Erich Mühsam had become a kind of minister of culture; both were Jews. This man appeared one morning in the main university lecture hall, accompanied by two Red Guards. The seventy-year-old rector Baeumker, a mild-mannered Catholic-Conservative intellectual, was brought in, and had to listen to the bloodthirsty speech Mühsam made under cover of his escorts' bayonets in front of the assembled teaching staff and students. Soon after that Kurt Eisner was shot dead by Count Arco, the army moved into Munich, and those of the leadership who had not already fled were shot dead, or, like the genteel Gustav Landauer, most brutally murdered. The hopeless beginning of the war had come to a wretched end. This was followed by a period of exhaustion and hopelessness, during which Hitler's Party began to form. But what initially prevailed was the quite natural reaction to the exaggerated effort of a nihilistic generation, which had been cheated of any sign of a homecoming.

## *Two German Men*

In this state of general dissolution of all inner and outer stability, in whose continuity only our fathers still believed, there was only one man in Germany whose words truly spoke to us: Max Weber. When I say 'us', I am talking about a small circle of students which

called itself 'Free Students' [*Freistudentenschaft*], in contrast to the student duelling corps. Our philosophical, social and political working groups met in the evening each week to present papers and have discussions. A Munich bookseller, a well-known character from Schwabing, put a room at our disposal. Max Weber, at our request, gave his lecture on 'Science as a Vocation' in his lecture hall during the winter semester of 1918–19. I can still see him in my mind's eye – the way he strode through the overcrowded hall to the lectern, looking pale and tired, and greeting my friend Percy Gothein on his way. His face, surrounded by an unkempt beard, reminded me of the sombre glow of the prophetic figures of Bamberg Cathedral.

He spoke without notes and without pause. His lecture was taken down in shorthand, and was published word for word as he delivered it. The impact was stunning. The experience and knowledge of a lifetime were condensed into these sentences. Everything came directly from within, thought through with the most critical reason, which forcefully impressed itself upon us through the sheer humane power that his personality lent it. The acuteness of the questions he posed corresponded with his refusal to offer any cheap solutions. He tore down all the veils from desirable objects, yet everyone none the less sensed that the heart of this clear-thinking intellect was profoundly humane. After the innumerable revolutionary speeches by the literary activists, Weber's words were like a salvation.

A second lecture on 'Politics as a Vocation' did not have the same overwhelming impact. A year later this man died of an illness, exhausted and wasted with the passion of his intellectual and political work. Reactionary students did not realize what they had lost in him because they had resented his courageous stand against Kurt Eisner's assassination. The German universities have not had another teacher of his calibre since, and if he had lived to experience 1933, I am certain that *he* would have remained steadfast to the extreme in the face of the contemptible co-ordination [*Gleichschaltung*] of the German professoriat. The mass of apprehensive, weak and indifferent colleagues would have found a relentless opponent in him, and his words might possibly have averted the pathetic fate that the German 'intelligentsia' had prepared for itself like an

explanation by contraries. He did not talk about 'character formation', since he had both – character and education. Neither would he, on any account, have tolerated the defamation of his Jewish colleagues – not because of a special liking for Jews as Jews, but because of his feeling of chivalry and his well-developed sense of justice. When, in 1934, I expressed this view to a German professor in Rome, his question in reply was: 'Yes, but was Max Weber himself not of Jewish extraction?' This gentleman could obviously not imagine that even a one-hundred-per-cent German might have interceded on behalf of Jews who were unable to defend themselves.

At the end of his two lectures Max Weber had prophesied what was soon to happen: that those who could not endure the tough fate of the times would be returning into the arms of the old churches, and that the 'conviction politicians', who intoxicated themselves with the Revolution of 1919, would become the victims of the reaction whose onset he estimated at ten years. Because before us lay not a blossoming spring but a night of impenetrable darkness, and it was therefore pointless to wait for prophets to tell us what we should be doing in our disenchanted world. From this Weber drew his lesson: we should set to work and meet the 'demands of the day'; this is plain and simple.

My most immediate task was to begin my academic studies. The struggle of the political parties could not interest me, as both those of the Left and those of the Right were fighting about things that were of no concern to me and therefore acted only as an irritant in my development. Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (*Observations of an Unpolitical Man*), published in 1918, gave me a kind of justification for this attitude.

Besides Max Weber, I can name only one other outstanding German who made a lifelong impression on me, and that was Albert Schweitzer. This unique person, Christian, doctor, musician and scholar, gave three lectures at Munich University whose language and content were as unaffected as they were urgent. I have never again heard another orator who merely through the quiet authority of his simple personality, was able so completely to captivate an audience of more than 1000 listeners after only a few softly spoken sentences. What emanated from him was not a demonic

power, as in Weber's case, but the earnestness of peace and the charm of moderation. It is a comfort to know that this man is still alive and working, and bears the true face of the German through all the nonsense and lies.

## *My First Friendship after the War*

During the period I described above I made friends with Percy Gothein, whose eccentricity repelled and alarmed most of my acquaintances. He came from a respected scholarly Heidelberg family and, like myself, did not take up his studies until his return from the war. He had been trapped during a gas attack, which had inflicted psychological scars on him, but I do not recall us ever having spoken a single word about our 'experience at the front'. (Significantly, most of the German books on the war were not published until a decade after its end.) I experienced for the first time in him the formative power that radiated from Stefan George and Friedrich Gundolf, and left its imprint so decisively on many young people of my generation. This beautiful and passionate person, extraordinary in his contempt for all social conventions, fascinated me immediately on our first acquaintance. We frequently spent a weekend in A. in the Isar Valley, where we had rented a small farmhouse for a very modest sum. Gothein's older brother – an expressionist painter who was devouring Dostoevsky's *The Devils* for the fourth time – had painted bright frescoes on its walls. There we talked all night long until daybreak, awash with the music of friendship. We were never able to abandon ourselves totally to this feeling of friendship, though, as dark forces of resistance forbade an accord. My critical rationality also fought against his psalm-like recitation of George's poems. No star shone on our one-year bond of friendship.*

We were pleased, though, when we met again by chance in later years: the first time in Rome, on the Christmas night of the '*anno santo*' (1924) in Sant' Anselmo church; the second time in Marburg, when Gothein attempted his habilitation. His plan failed, and I

*Translator's note: '*Kein Stern waltete über unserm einjährigen Bunde.*' Löwith alludes here to George's 1914 volume of poetry, *Der Stern des Bundes*.

never found out what happened to him after Hitler. Rumour had it that he had been making speeches for some time while working for the Party, but this had apparently landed him in an embarrassing situation because of his father's Jewish origins.

## *The Circle around Stefan George and the Ideology of National Socialism*

We should not underestimate the role that the circle around George played as an intellectual precursor of National Socialist ideology. The ideals of this exclusive elite have increasingly become commonplace, and it is also more than coincidence that the journalist and Minister Goebbels, this 'loud mouthpiece' of National Socialism, had studied under the Jew Gundolf. The circle around George was connected with the German youth movement, which in certain ways anticipated the awakening [*Aufbruch*] of National Socialism. For these people, the entire bourgeois Christian world was already dead long before Hitler. They loathed the 'bloodless intellect' and distinguished between 'educational' and 'primal experiences', as well as promulgating the different ranking of the common and the aristocratic against universal human rights. In contrast to the capitalist or even socialist state, they spoke of the '*Reich*'; instead of an 'anti-natural Christianity', they preached a body-worshipping paganism; and they took pride in the affinity between the German and the Greek nature. They cultivated the spirit of masculine love between educators and youth, and the discipline of a religious order. The slogan coined by Wolters was 'mastery and service'. They especially praised the virtues of warriors and heroes. Absolute obedience to the master was a self-understood duty. It was a kind of aristocratic Nazism comparable to the aristocratic Communism of many intellectuals after the collapse.

In 1933, the time when it became necessary to make a decision either for or against the new system, the circle around George waited for the master's reaction. The new Minister of Culture had offered him the presidency of the Academy for Poetry, and everyone was eagerly awaiting George's decision. He turned it down, and was replaced by a mediocre person who was devoid of any

poetic pretensions. Soon after that, the sick George betook himself to Switzerland to die outside Germany, as Rilke had done before him. The difference between the new *Reich* in George's poetry and that of the ignoble reality could not be disguised by any commemoration in honour of the dead poet.

Most of it had happened and no one saw . . .
The bleakest is yet to come and no one sees.
To rejoice is unseemly: there will be no triumph.
Only much doom without honour . . .

These verses from the poem *The War* can also be applied to the *Reich*.

The older generation of the George circle was sure to reject a dictatorship based on mass democracy, if only for aesthetic reasons. The younger generation had a clear inclination towards revolutionary renewal, even though this did not include the 'stature' of its leader. Ernst Bertram, the literary historian who had become known through his book on Nietzsche, and whose aesthetic orations about the German 'awakening' were printed in many newspapers, took a middle position between the generations. In these speeches he asserted that nobody could stand aside in this new 'political-spiritual Battle of the Teutoburg Forest'*. Those who refused to fight on grounds of conscience were committing a 'crime against their ancestors and descendants' for which they could never make amends. On the whole, though, they did not sympathize with Hitler's SA, but rather with the men in the Prussian general staff (see Elze's books on Hindenburg and Frederick the Great).

A tragic split developed between his Aryan and Jewish disciples. My friend and colleague Rudolf Fahrner – an intelligent, gifted and fine youth, whose only weakness lay in Wolters having given him his intellectual backbone too early, and who believed that he would be able to practise the self-preservation of the seventy-year-old

*The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest refers to the revolt organized by Arminius (Hermann), leader of the Germanic tribe of the Cherusci, against the Romans, who were trying to expand their Empire as far as the Elbe, in AD 9. In a surprise attack in the Teutoburg Forest, the Cherusci destroyed three Roman legions, thereby thwarting the Roman conquest of Germany. The renewed battle referred to here alludes to the need for a reassertion of German identity, and power in the political and spiritual spheres.

Goethe at the age of twenty-five – sacrificed his friendship with Karl Schefold to politics because his friend would not break off his engagement to a non-Aryan girl. He also gave me to understand that he had never been able to approve of my 'mixed marriage'. To him race and the Jewish question seemed central to the renewal of German life; this did not, of course, prevent him from recognizing Jews as a creative asset to German culture. The question was all the more delicate as numerous Jews belonged to the George circle (Karl Wolfskehl, Friedrich Gundolf, Edgar Salin, Berthold Vallentin, Erich Kahler, Ernst Kantorowicz, Kurt Singer and several others – even the idolized boy 'Maximin' was a Jewish scion). Quite a number of them would no doubt have dedicated themselves to the movement had it not been for their racial handicap, since the national pathos initially drowned out the socialist element. Others saw themselves as the 'secret Germany' that could not be harmed by any apparent rejection and removal. It never became clear to them how far they had subordinated the secret *Reich* to the public one, so as to maintain their lifelong illusion.

Edgar Salin, whom I visited in Basle during the course of my stay there for a lecture just after the Nazi takeover, continued to mock narrow-minded Switzerland, to which he owed the security of his none too heroic existence. Neither did he have the least scruple, even after Hitler's rise to power, about boasting of his association with prominent Party members in Berlin. His study, in which he received me with measured dignity after an appropriate waiting period, was furnished in magnificent Renaissance style. Busts of Dante and Goethe and framed Napoleonic maxims served to create the suitable mood. In 1938 he sent me a copy of his new book on Burckhardt and Nietzsche. It is written to the greater glory of Nietzsche, and his description of Burckhardt's relations with Nietzsche is distorted by the circle's usual yardstick of 'poets and heroes'.

I came across precisely the same trains of thought in Japan, where chance reunited me with Kurt Singer, who was employed as a teacher in the same place as I. Like Salin he was a reluctant political economist by profession, while Greek poetry and philosophy were his true passion. Those who knew only the lofty diction of his book on Plato would have been surprised to meet a very nimble and touchy gentleman in the private persona of the author. Simmel's

style of thinking came decidedly more naturally to a man of his disposition than the austere pathos of the writing style he acquired in the 'circle'. Politically he was a fascist: he loathed all democratic institutions, and, moreover, defended Japan's invasion of China as a world-historical mission. When Hitler, whose seizure of power he witnessed only from afar in Japan, annexed Austria and the Sudentenland he spoke of the emergent 'Reich' that now lacked only the Ukraine, and of '*our* German Army', with shining eyes and an erect bearing that made a comical impression!

He disliked being reminded of his Jewishness, and preferred talking about the Czech rape of Sudeten Germans rather than the suffering of the Jews in Germany. Although he was very small and physically self-conscious, he bore the trait of 'heroic greatness' in his gestures and words. In Japan he was particularly fond of visiting the historic sites of heroes, and it was merely a stupid coincidence that not he but an ardent Nazi and anti-Semite gave lectures there on the 'myth' and the 'heroic'. But Kurt Singer did not lack a sense of humour and superiority; therefore, we can only hope that he also saw the irony of his tragic departure from Sendai: since he had not been very popular at his school because of his provocative pseudo-Prussian manner, the director used the political constellation between Japan and Germany as an excuse to terminate his contract. The ousted fascist was replaced by a young Sudeten German who now really represented the *Reich* in a legitimate fashion. Leaving aside his political perversion, Kurt Singer was a quick-witted man with some endearing traits. Every respect was due to the way this fifty-year-old bachelor kept intellectually alive and expanded his broad knowledge and interests in Japan, despite of a complete lack of exchange and information.

An entirely different case was Karl Wolfskehl, whose degree of humaneness surpassed his devotion to George. I was fortunate in having frequent opportunities to meet him in Rome. I had already made his acquaintance in Munich where, as a member of the Rotary Club, he had also been on friendly terms with my father. This powerful, tall and important man was one of the founder members of the George circle, and had for decades been the entertaining focal point of a select social coterie. He knew German and Romance literature better than many a specialist, and was an excellent translator. His

library was famous for its book-lovers' treasures. This spontaneously enthusiastic and pampered man, though he was completely devoid of superficiality, had been so shocked by German events that he recovered only very slowly and with great difficulty. In our conversations he only once touched on his flight from Germany. When I met him in Rome in 1934 he was an imposing ruin. The expressive face of the former Bohemian had been transformed into the pale features of a blind seer, and they now resembled the eerie hieroglyphics of his uncontrolled scrawl. Although his eyesight was failing, he still enjoyed to the full the beauty of Rome and the specialities of Rome's *trattorie*. A Catholic girlfriend used to accompany him to Church celebrations.

He lived in the old Roman artists' quarter, in a dark hole at the rear of a tenement building on the Via Margutta, which contained nothing but a shabby iron bedstead, a broken wickerwork chair and a dirty table. In this cell he had undergone a transformation, which he publicized in a slim volume of poems. It was published in 1936 by the Jewish Schockenverlag under the title *Die Stimme spricht* (The Voice Speaks). The voice that spoke to him was the voice of the Jewish God of the Old Testament and his prophets. The inner ardour of his life had caused him to have second thoughts about his religious origins, and everything that he had lived for and written for decades had, for him, burst like a soap-bubble. Only one thing had remained of his Germanness, which he had so fervently embraced: his Darmstadt intonation and the gift of words.

Lord! I want to return to your word.
Lord! I want to pour away my wine.
Lord! I want to go to you · I want to be gone.
Lord! I know not whither nor why!
I am alone.
Alone in empty · breathless air ·
Alone in my heart · shy of my own self.
All my colourful bubbles have burst ·
All my wisdom becometh smoke and chaff.
I am poor · God! Reborn

By the time I left Rome, Wolfskehl had withdrawn to the solitude of Recco, near Genoa. His appearance was neglected, but his soul

remained pure. A year later Italy adopted the German race laws. Wolfskehl moved on, left Europe and went to New Zealand.

The universal fate of both the German and the Jewish intelligentsia was mirrored in the destinies of the circle around George. Its members had formed an elite in German intellectual life, and the Jews belonging to it had proved by their appreciation, participation and work that they were capable of becoming Germanized without reservation. But in spite of this, the Jews were neither able to escape their Jewish fate, nor could the others escape the assimilation of their ideas in 1933. They prepared the path for National Socialism, which later they themselves did not follow. But which of the more radical individuals of a generation reaching maturity during the war would not have prepared the way for it, by *accepting the dissolution* and the *critique of the existing condition*, a theme which had been introduced even before the war in the *Jahrbücher für die geistige Bewegung*, edited by Gundolf and Wolters. In their introduction to the third volume (1912) they said: 'Nobody honestly believes in the foundations of today's state of the world any more. The gloomy forebodings and presentiments are still the most authentic feeling of our epoch and, in contrast, all the hopes of building Something on Nothing look fairly desperate.'

## *Oswald Spengler and Karl Barth*

The consciousness of the decline not only of the universities but of the entire educational tradition was already so widespread from the days of Burckhardt, Lagarde and Nietzsche that the most varied groups of the German intelligentsia were engaged in a common destruction which varied only in its objective - in so far as there was one. (In December 1931 a series of articles under the characteristic heading 'Is there still a university?' appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, in which Paul Tillich, Eduard Spranger and Karl Jaspers, amongst others, aired their views on this question.) These differences manifested themselves only when Hitler's Party assumed power and now positively wanted something that would put an end to the destruction and prepare a ground, the price of which was a forced assimilation.

Even Spengler – who promoted the ideology of National Socialism through his writings like no other – took fright and turned away from it at the moment of his actual victory, because he no longer recognized his 'Prussian socialism' in what was now really happening. On the other hand, his former students felt bitterly disappointed with his book which appeared in 1933 (*Jahre der Entscheidung*: Years of Decision),[3] because it did not make a single mention of Hitler, and sketched a portrait of the 'white Bolshevism' whose truth was obviously confirmed only six years later – the year of the pact with Russia. But as typical as the National Socialists' rejection of Spengler's 'Decision' was the intellectuals' attitude to the *Untergang des Abendlandes* (The Decline of the West, 1918). Stung into action by Spengler's thesis of decline, and annoyed by its scientific pretensions, the academic representatives of the most varied disciplines united to refute Spengler in a special issue of *Logos*. Every one of them criticized the many errors and inadequacies in relation to their own discipline without examining the overall thesis, because the mood of the time convinced them of its truth, despite their superior knowledge in specific areas. In general, at any rate, the fact and consciousness of the dissolution had developed long before Hitler to a point at which radical change became possible, and this turning point was National Socialism – that is *the dissolution under an opposing sign*. It was called 'awakening'.

Apart from Spengler's book, there was only one other of similar importance, albeit a less influential one: Karl Barth's *Römerbrief* (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 1957), which was published at the same time. This work too subsisted on the negation of progress, in that it drew theological lessons from the decline of culture. The lack of faith in all human solutions that had been promoted by the war drove Barth from Christian socialism to his radical theology, which rejects any 'development' of Christianity at its root. These two works by Spengler and Barth, which bore the imprint of the period at the end of the First World War, were the books that most excited us.

## *In Freiburg with Edmund Husserl*

When I left Munich for Freiburg in spring 1919, in the midst of the worst political unrest, my Munich teachers Alexander Pfänder and

Moritz Geiger recommended me to Edmund Husserl. He had become Rickert's successor in 1916 and, from that time onwards, had been the philosophical centre of attraction not only at Freiburg University but of German philosophy in general. Many foreigners, too, went to Freiburg on his account. Through the mastery of phenomenological analysis, the sober clarity of the lecture and the humane rigour of academic schooling, he educated us intellectually, referring us beyond the transient realities to the timeless 'essence' of phenomena, which he understood according to patterns of mathematical and logical beings. In seminar exercises he forced us to avoid long words, to test each concept by intuiting phenomena, and to give him 'small coins', rather than big 'paper money', in response to his questions. He was among those who are 'conscientious in spirit', as Nietzsche called the type in *Zarathustra*.

What I cannot forget are the days when we feared that French troops would occupy Freiburg, and the lecture halls were emptying: how this great scholar continued his presentation with even greater composure and self-assurance, as if the whole earnestness of scholarly work could not be interrupted by anything in the world. And it is precisely those aspects of Husserl's 'Ideas' which did not inspire us, his theory of the 'reduction to the transcendental consciousness', that I had the opportunity to appreciate in its ethical root and effectiveness in 1933: the Freiburg world in which Husserl had worked for decades was for him now indeed 'bracketed out' by the National Socialist revolution, but this never had the power to cloud his philosophical consciousness. Although he had already retired, he was again dismissed by the state; his works were banned from the libraries and were pilloried as Jewish works. Even though the university owed its reputation to no small extent to him, it avoided any embarrassment by ignoring the whole affair. A Herr Grunsky later wrote a pamphlet which was supposed to prove that Husserl, like Philo and Cohen before him, had 'Talmudicized' the world of ideas of the 'Aryan' Plato.[4]

## *Martin Heidegger's Philosophy of Time (1919–36)*

A young man who was at the time still entirely unknown beyond Freiburg, Martin Heidegger, was working with Husserl and yet

already against him. As a person Heidegger was the opposite of his essentially childlike master, Husserl, and as students we were more intensely attracted to the younger man. He became my actual tutor to whom I owe my intellectual development. The power of fascination that emanated from him was partly based on his impenetrable nature: nobody knew where they were with him, and his persona as well as his lectures have been the object of intense controversy for years. Like Fichte, only one half of him was an academic. The other – and probably greater – half was a militant and preacher who knew how to interest people by antagonizing them, and whose discontent with the epoch and himself was driving him on.

If we want to understand the character of this man and his philosophy, we have to remind ourselves of expressionist art which, even before the war, mirrored the disintegration of our old European educational world in loud colours and words. Hugo Ball, the founder of 'Dadaism', that most extreme form of decline in linguistic structure, said in his book *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* (Escape from the Times) that there are epochs and people whose exclusive concern lies with the 'rough plan' because their world is out of joint. (He himself had taken refuge in the Catholic Church.) 'The philosopher of our epoch spends two thirds of his life in fruitless efforts to find a way in the chaos.' Also, that we could be satisfied with the 'smallest and tidiest' things only if the disruptions are as severe as those affecting our generation. Heidegger's intellectual world is also small and tidy: it sweeps away anything that no longer seems congruent with time and place.[5] Rilke was the poet of this destructive period. A few sentences from his letters could easily serve as a guiding principle for an understanding of Heidegger's work. Through its belief in progress and humanity, the bourgeois world has forgotten the 'ultimate instances' of human life – namely 'that it has been once and for all surpassed by death and by God' (*Briefe* [Letters], 1914–21, pp. 89 ff.). In *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*, death has no other meaning than that of an 'unsurpassable last instance' of our Being and capacities. In Heidegger, of course, God is no longer at issue; he had been too much of a theologian to be able, like Rilke, once again to tell 'Stories of the Dear Lord'. For Heidegger, death is the nothingness that reveals the finitude of our

temporal existence; or, as he put it in one of his first Freiburg lectures, death is 'historical facticity'.

For us Van Gogh was the artist who most profoundly expressed the problem of our times. Heidegger wrote in a letter to me in 1923:

> One of Van Gogh's remarks has obsessed me now for semesters: 'I feel with all my power that the history of humankind is like that of grains of wheat: if one is not planted in the earth to flourish, come what may, one will be ground up for bread.' Woe betide anyone who is not crushed.

Instead of devoting oneself to the general seed for cultivation, as one would upon receiving the command to 'save culture', one must – in a 'radical disintegration and repression', a '*destruction*' – convince oneself firmly of 'the one thing that matters' without bothering with the chatter and bustle of clever and enterprising people who measure time by the clock. In this search for 'the one thing that matters', Heidegger turns above all towards Kierkegaard, though he does not permit himself to be consumed by him. The theme and goal of Heidegger's existentialist philosophy was, after all, not 'to attract attention to Christianity' but to 'formally thematize' this-worldly existence: 'My will, fundamentally, aspires to something else, and that is not much: living in an actual revolutionary situation, I pursue what I feel to be "necessary", without caring to know whether a new "culture" will emerge from it or an acceleration of decline' (Letter, 1920). He had a horror of all philosophies of 'culture', as well as of philosophy conferences; the profusion of journals that appeared after the war aroused his emotional wrath. Even Jaeger's *Antike* seemed futile and useless to him. With bitter severity he wrote of Scheler that he was 'reviving' Eduard von Hartmann for a change, while other scholars edited an *Ethos* and a *Kairos* in addition to the *Logos*. 'And what will be next week's joke? I believe that a lunatic asylum would offer a more reasonable and clear perspective than this epoch.' As a result of this negation in principle of all that existed, as well as all programmes aiming at reform, Heidegger at the same time made us guard against the misinterpretation and overestimation of his own work – against the idea that he would have something 'positive' to say, or 'new results' to show.

'The idea has emerged that our critique must be opposed to something that corresponds in content to that which has just been denied, or that our work would find its destiny in a school or trend, that it could be continued and complemented.' This work, he continued, is *nothing* of the kind. Indeed, it is limited to a critical and rational destruction of the philosophical and theological traditions; it thereby remains 'something apart from and perhaps out of reach of the bustle of the day' (Letter, 1924). On the whole, by viewing himself as beyond what is in and out of fashion, the philosopher must derive satisfaction, for where things age rapidly, there is not necessarily much depth to be found. His later attempt at a 'fundamental ontology' was born of this attitude: that is to say, to analyse Being on the basis of temporal existence, and to 'destroy', beginning from this position, the history of the reflection on Being, from the Greeks to Nietzsche, to concentrate on the unique question of the meaning of Being – the question that is, at the same time, the simplest and most original.

The enormous success of his lectures and the extraordinary influence of his work, despite its difficulty, pushed Heidegger beyond the originally desired limits and made his thought fashionable. While this was indeed not intended by him, it was at the same time a natural consequence of his role as a displaced preacher. The primary attraction of his philosophical doctrine was not that it led us to await a new system; rather, it was its thematic indeterminacy and the sheer appeal of his philosophical will, his intellectual intensity and his concentration on 'the one thing that mattered'. Only later did we understand that this 'one thing' was essentially nothing more than a pure Resolve whose aim was undefined. One of the students invented the pertinent joke: 'I am resolved, only towards what I don't know'.

The inner nihilism – even the 'National Socialism' – of this pure Resolve in the face of nothingness was initially hidden beneath certain traits which suggested a religious devotion; indeed, at this time (the early 1920s) Heidegger had not yet definitively broken with his theological origins. I recall seeing portraits of Pascal and Dostoevsky on his desk in Freiburg, and on the wall in the corner of the room – which resembled a cell – hung an expressionist crucifixion scene. He gave me *The Imitation* by Thomas à Kempis as

a Christmas present in 1920. Even in 1925, he saw spiritual substance in theology alone, in Barth and Gogarten.[6] At that time he was closest to Bultmann with whom he held a seminar on the young Luther. It was quite unreasonable, though, to expect theology students to reconcile the pseudo-Christian categories of Heidegger's existential ontology with their diverse theologies.

I found the key to Heidegger's godless theology in a letter he wrote in 1921. Here he explains his 'I am' or 'historical facticity' by saying that he is a 'Christian theo*logian*' (in inverted commas), and this is where his 'radical self-concern', and at the same time his scholarship, resides; because the academic rigour of conceptual analysis was accentuating his actual existence, which therefore became a problem as 'facticity in general'. Only a small minority of us would be capable of existentially understanding this connection between personal pathos and conceptual passion. Closest to understanding this were Catholic theologians like Przywara and Guardini, who saw through Heidegger's premisses more clearly than we did.

The hidden motto of his existential ontology – '*unus quisque robustus sit in existentia sua*' – also comes from Luther. Heidegger, abandoning his faith in Christ, translates it into German by ceaselessly insisting on that which alone is important: that 'each individual do what his capacities permit' – that is to say, 'the authentic capacity-for-Being always specific to each individual', or the 'existential limit of our ownmost particular historical facticity'. He claimed that this 'capacity-for-Being' was both a duty and a 'destiny'. He wrote to me in 1921:

> I do only what I must do and what I believe to be necessary, and I do it as my powers permit. I do not embellish my philosophical labours with cultural requirements suitable for a vague historical present. Neither do I subscribe to Kierkegaard's outlook. I work from my own 'I am' and my particular spiritual origins. From this facticity surges the fury of 'Existence'.

Those who reflect on Heidegger's later partisanship for Hitler's movement will find, in this first formulation of the idea of historical existence, the constituents of his political decision of several years

hence. One need only abandon the still quasi-religious isolation, and apply authentic 'existence' – 'always particular to each individual' – and the 'duty' [*Müssen*] which follows from it to 'specifically German existence' and its historical destiny, in order thereby to introduce into the general course of German existence the energetic but empty movement of his existential categories ('to decide for oneself'; 'to take stock of oneself in the face of nothingness'; 'wanting one's ownmost destiny'; 'to take responsibility for oneself') and to proceed from there to 'destruction', now on the terrain of politics. Thus it is no mere chance that one finds a political 'decisionism' in Carl Schmitt which corresponds to Heidegger's existentialist philosophy,[7] in which the 'capacity-for-Being-a-whole' of individual authentic existence is transposed to the 'totality' of the authentic state, which is itself always particular. Corresponding to the preservation and affirmation of Heidegger's '*Dasein*' is Schmitt's affirmation of political existence; to Heidegger's 'freedom for death', Schmitt's 'sacrifice of life' in the politically paramount case of war. The principle is the same in both cases: naked 'facticity', which is all that remains of life when one has suppressed all traditional living *contents*.

Heidegger had twice been offered a chair in Berlin: during the Weimar Republic (1930) and at the onset of National Socialism (1933). He declined both offers, and with his second rejection he gave a semblance of a reason – of it having something to do with being 'rooted in the soil' of his intellectual existence. He published an essay in the newspaper *Der Alemanne* (7 February 1934) which carried the provocative title: 'Why do we stay in the provinces?'. After a brief description of Heidegger's own ski-hut in the Black Forest, where the more intimate circle of students often spent hospitable weeks, there followed a polemical attack on the educated 'townspeople' who spend their holidays in the Black Forest to 'view' and 'enjoy' its beauty objectively – two words which have a contemptuous ring with Heidegger because they denote idle behaviour without 'access'. He claimed that he himself generally never 'viewed' the landscape; rather, that it was his 'working world', and the pace of his work was anchored in the happenings of this mountain world. It was not the idle *theorein* or viewing, but the active practice of the caring existence that disclosed the Being of

this world, and this all the more so when wild blizzards raged around the hut, and everything was covered and veiled, which was also the 'high time' for philosophy. The work of thinking had to be as 'hard' and 'sharp' as this dangerous mountain world, and philosophy in its essence was in no way distinguishable from the work of the farmer. The essay ends with a sentimental story about an old farmer who only shook his head when Heidegger told him about the offer of a chair in Berlin, and ended with the words: 'Absolutely not!'. What, after all, should the Aleman, a little king in Freiburg, do among all the many bigwigs and prominent figures of Berlin?

This essay, which was intentionally populist in tone (similar to a lecture that Heidegger once gave us on skiing), contained all the essential existential categories without expressing them. Their affinity with National Socialist ideology was not difficult to discern: one thanks God – as Herr Goering liked to say – that one is not objective where will and engagement are concerned. With Nietzsche one denies pleasure, happiness and comfort, while one accepts the harshness of fate and the severity of work, which should be the same for the peasant and the scholar. The proposition that philosophical contemplation is the highest human activity because it is unaffected by immediate needs, which has held good from Aristotle to Hegel, is reinterpreted or negated by National Socialist existence and its philosophy.

But what would Heidegger have said if one had reminded him that even a National Socialist windbag like Hermann Glockner made precisely the same claims in 1934 in the first issue of the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturphilosophie* – the former *Logos* – when he proclaimed the wisdom that German philosophy had a particularly intimate relationship with soldiers and peasants, in contrast to the intellectualism (Descartes) of idle theory? Perhaps he would have been shocked by this undesirable affinity, yet not have understood on what it was founded – on his communion with the National Socialist 'they', no matter how much he may have consciously distanced himself from the tastelessness of official Party philosophy and its blood-and-soil talk. The rebellion against the 'spirit' had its advocates in very different camps: in that of Klages and Baeumler, and that of Heidegger and Schmitt; and perhaps one had to live outside Germany to appreciate such local differences as variations on one and the same theme.

## *Heidegger's Translation of 'One's Ownmost Individual* Dasein' *into the 'German* Dasein'

Heidegger acceded to the rectorship of Freiburg University in 1933. This was quite an event at this critical juncture of the 'German revolution', in so far as all the other universities lacked a leader capable of filling his role – not merely by virtue of his Party membership but by virtue of his intellectual stature. The great majority of the German intelligentsia was reactionary or indifferent. Heidegger had resisted the call to Berlin, but he succumbed to the temptation of directing his own university. His decision took on more than local importance, and created a general stir. The students in Berlin demanded that all the other universities follow the example of 'co-ordination' practised in Freiburg. On the other hand, however, refusing the Freiburg rectorship would not have remained without impact either, because Heidegger was then at the zenith of his fame. Heidegger's students were surprised by his decision. He had previously almost never expressed his opinion about political issues, and it did not seem that he had a firm opinion concerning them. Heidegger, however, inaugurated his rectorship with a speech on 'The Self-Affirmation of the German University'. He sent me a copy of it with 'cordial greetings', while my Aryan friends received one with the 'German greeting'.

In comparison with the numerous pamphlets and speeches published by the co-ordinated professors after the Nazi takeover, Heidegger's speech is philosophically demanding – a minor stylistic masterpiece. But from a strictly philosophical standpoint, it is strangely ambiguous from beginning to end. It succeeds in positing existential and ontological categories at a specific historical 'moment' (*Sein und Zeit*, para. 74) in a way that suggests that their philosophical intentions *a priori* go hand in hand with the political situation, and that academic freedom goes with political coercion. 'Labour service' and 'military service' are on a par with 'service in knowledge', such that at the end of the speech, one was in doubt as to whether one should start reading Diels's *Pre-Socratics* or enlist in the SA. This is why the speech should not be judged according to one point of view alone, be it purely political or purely philosophical. It would be equally weak considered as a political speech or a

philosophical essay. It transposes Heidegger's historical existentialism to contemporary German reality; thus for the first time his will for action finds suitable terrain, and the formal outline of existential categories receives decisive content.[8]

The speech begins with a strange contradiction. *In opposition* to the subordination of university autonomy to the state, it advocates the university's 'self-affirmation', while denying academic freedom in its 'liberal' form as well as 'self-administration' *in order to integrate the universities seamlessly* into the National Socialist schema of 'leaders' and 'followers'. He argues that the duty of the rector consists in the spiritual leadership of the professors and students. But he too – the leader – must in turn be led, by the 'spiritual mission of the *Volk*'. The content and direction of this historical mission remain indeterminate. In the last analysis, the mission is decreed by 'fate'. Corresponding to the indeterminacy of the mission is an emphasis on its 'inexorability'. Moreover, the fate of the *Volk* is related to the destiny of the universities by unarguable decree; the mission with which the universities are charged is the same as that of the *Volk*. German science and German fate affirm their power in *a single* 'essential will to power'. The will to essence is tacitly identified with the will to power, in so far as, from the National Socialist perspective, what is essential is the will as such.[9] Prometheus, the symbol of Western will, is the 'first philosopher'[10] deserving of a following. As characterized by this Promethean will, European man is alleged to have 'risen up against "beings"' to question their Being of beings, and this revolutionary uprising characterizes '*Geist*' – the latter surrenders before the superiority of fate, and becomes creative by virtue of this very impotence. Spirit is not universal reason, not understanding, not intelligence and certainly not wit [*esprit*], but rather a 'knowing Resolve' towards the essence of Being. Thus the true 'world of spirit' would be a 'world of extreme outer and inner danger'.

In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche had said that danger is man's real 'calling'. With military rigour, the student, animated by the will to knowledge, is commanded to 'advance' to the 'outpost of the most extreme danger', to march, to engage himself and expose himself, to persevere resolutely in the general acceptance of the German destiny 'there' in Hitler. The relation to *Führer* and *Volk*, to honour

and fate of the *Volk*, is part and parcel of 'service in knowledge'. In response to Nietzsche's question as to whether or not Europe wants to be itself, one reads 'we want ourselves'. The youthful power of the German *Volk* has already decided in favour of the will to self-affirmation – not only in the university, but also with respect to German *Dasein* in its totality. But in order fully to appreciate the 'splendour and greatness of this awakening', one must recall the wisdom of Plato's saying, which Heidegger translates (in a wilful distortion) as: *Alles Grosse steht im Sturm*!: 'Everything great stands in the storm!'* This was the stormy finale of Heidegger's wisdom. What young SS officer would not have felt moved, or would have been able to see through the Greek nimbus of this highly German '*Stürmen*' if he possessed sufficient philosophical training?

The community of teachers and students would also be a 'community of struggle', for only struggle [*Kampf*] furthers and preserves knowledge. In a lecture from the same period, Heidegger says that 'essence' discloses itself to courage alone, not to contemplation, and truth allows itself to be recognized only to the extent that one 'requires' it of oneself. The German Gemüt (or temperament) itself is related to such courage [*Mut*]. Accordingly, even the enemy is not only 'present'; *Dasein* must create its enemy in order not to become deadened. All that 'is' is 'governed by struggle', and where there is neither struggle nor authority, decadence reigns. Essence 'essences' struggle. In reality, however, no Greek struggle [*Agon*] emerged in German universities, even under Heidegger's leadership, but only the dull monotony of forced assimilation. It condemned the better elements to silence, and accustomed the majority to a dual language – an authentic one between their own four walls and an inauthentic one in the public sphere whose organization restricted everyone from all sides.

Heidegger's leadership lasted only a year. After much disillusionment and many vexations, he resigned his 'commission' in order to oppose, in his usual way, the new 'they', risking bitter remarks in his lectures, which in no way contradicted his substantive attachment to National Socialism as a protestational movement of faith. For the 'spirit' of National Socialism pertained less to its 'national'

*Translator's Note: The correct translation reads 'That which is great is most exposed to risk'.

and 'social' dimensions than to its radical Resolve and dynamics, which, trusting in itself alone – that is, in its ownmost (German) '*Seinkönnen*' (capacity-for-Being) – renounced all discussion and agreement. Expressions of violence thoroughly determine the vocabulary of both National Socialist politics and Heidegger's philosophy. The apodeictic character of Heidegger's emotive formulations corresponds to the dictatorial style of politics. Both provoke with an insidious desire to snub. It is the level of discourse, not of method, which defines the internal differences among a 'community of followers'; and in the end it is 'fate' which justifies all willing and confers its metaphysical mantle on the latter.

One month after Heidegger's inaugural speech, Karl Barth wrote his theological appeal against co-ordination with the reigning powers, 'Theological Existence Today'. This paper was and remained the only serious expression of academic resistance against the raging time. To be capable of an analogous act, philosophy, instead of treating 'Being and *Time*', would have to treat 'the Being of *Eternity*'. But the crucial point about Heidegger's philosophy consisted precisely in its 'resolute temporal understanding of time'; even as a philosopher, he remained a theologian on this point, in so far as eternity seemed to be identical with God, concerning whom the philosopher 'could know nothing'. Heidegger's negative interlinking of a philosophical conception of time with the theological question of eternity was made plain only in one lecture that he gave in July 1924.

From this historical-political background, the specifically German aspects of Heidegger's conception of *Dasein* become clear: Existence and Resolve, Being and the Capacity-for-Being, the explanation of this capacity as one of destiny and duty, the stubborn insistence that this Capacity-for-Being is 'my particular' (German) capacity. Moreover, the terms recur unceasingly: discipline and coercion (even to attain 'intellectual clarity', one must 'coerce oneself'), hard, inexorable and severe, taut and sharp ('existence must be maintained at its peak'); to persevere and stand on one's own, to encounter and expose oneself to danger; revolution, awakening and disruption.[11] All these terms reflect the disastrous intellectual mind-set of virtually the whole postwar generation in Germany. The minutiae of their thought was concerned with

'origins' or 'ultimates' or 'borderline situations'. At base, all these concepts and terms are expressions of the bitter and hard Resolve of a will that affirms itself in the face of nothingness, for an existence that is devoid of peace and joy, and proud of its contempt of happiness and human compassion.[12]

In 1927, the year in which Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* first appeared, I doubt that any of us would have imagined that 'one's ownmost' death, radically individualized, which Heidegger exemplified by referring to Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Illich*, would be travestied six years later in a celebration of a National Socialist 'hero'. For the leap in the existential analytic from death to Heidegger's Schlageter speech (*Freiburger Studentenzeitung*, 1 June 1933)* is merely a passage from a particular and individual *Dasein* to one that is general, no less particular by virtue of its generality – namely, one of German *Dasein*.[13]

In this memorial speech, composed in bombastic style, it is said that Schlageter died 'the most difficult and greatest of all deaths', shot in cold blood (for sabotage in French-occupied territory), while his humiliated nation was on its knees. 'All alone, drawing on his own inner strength, he had to place before his soul an image of the future awakening of the Volk to honour and greatness so that he could die believing in this future.' Heidegger enquired after the origins of this 'hardness of will' and 'clarity of heart'. He cites in response the 'primeval rocks' of the Black Forest mountains (Schlageter's home) and their autumnal limpidity. These earthy, natural forces are said to have been transposed into the will and heart of this young hero.

In fact, Schlageter had been one of the numerous young Germans left without recourse after the war. Some became Communists; others followed an opposite course. They are superbly described in Ernst von Salomon's novel *The City*. Disenfranchised by the war, they returned from military service unable to find a place in civilian life and joined one of the Freikorps units, living their lives in anti-social aimlessness, adhering to whatever unruly cause presented itself. This is what the existentialist philosopher calls 'duty'. 'He was

*Translator's Note: Schlageter, a student at Freiburg University, participated in acts of sabotage against the French occupation army after the First World War; he was executed and later canonized by the National Socialists.

compelled to go to the Baltic; he was *compelled* to go to Upper Silesia; he was *compelled* to go to the Ruhr'; he was *compelled* to fulfil the destiny chosen by himself! Here is the *Fatum* (Fate) of classical tragedy become German verbosity – that of a philospher, no less!

Some months after this speech, Germany, with much fuss, left the League of Nations.[14] The *Führer* decreed elections afterwards in order to demonstrate that Germany and Hitler stood united. Heidegger made the Freiburg students march in formation to the local polling station so that they could give their assent to Hitler's decision *en bloc*. (At other universities, like Marburg, it was still possible to cast a yes *or* a no vote, although it was a secret ballot only in name.) A 'yes' to Hitler's decision seemed to him to signify an affirmation of 'authentic existence'. The electoral appeal he published in his capacity as rector conforms entirely with the National Socialist idiom and, at the same, time represents a popularized summary of Heidegger's philosophy:

> German men and women!
> The German people has been summoned by the *Führer* to vote. The *Führer*, however, is asking nothing of the people. Rather, he is giving the people the possibility of making, directly, the highest decision of all: whether it – the entire people – wants its own existence or whether it does *not* want it. This election simply cannot be compared to all other previous elections. What is unique about this election is the simple greatness of the decision that is to be executed. The inexorability of what is simple and ultimate, however, tolerates no vacillation or hesitation. This ultimate decision reaches to the outermost limit of our *people's existence*. And what is this limit? It consists in the most basic demand of all *Dasein* that it preserve and save its own essence. A barrier is thereby erected between what can be reasonably expected of a people and what cannot. It is by virtue of this basic law of honour that a people preserves the dignity and resoluteness of its essence. It is not ambition, not desire for glory, not blind obstinacy, and not hunger for power that demands from the *Führer* that Germany withdraw from the 'League of Nations'. It is only the clear will to unconditional self-determination in enduring and mastering the fate of our people. That is *not* a

> turning away from the community of nations. On the contrary – with this step our people is submitting itself to that essential law of human existence to which every people must first give allegiance if it is still to be a people. It is only out of this parallel observance by all peoples of this unconditional demand of self-determination that there emerges the possibility of taking one another seriously so that a community can be affirmed. The will to a true community of nations is equally far removed both from an unrestrained, vague desire for world fraternity and from blind tyranny. That will operates beyond this opposition. It allows peoples and states to stand by one another in an open and manly fashion as self-reliant entities . . . Our will to national self-determination desires that each people find and preserve the greatness and truth of its own destiny. This will is the highest guarantee of security among peoples; for it binds itself to the basic law of manly respect and unconditional honour. On the 12th of November, the German people as a whole will choose *its* future, which is bound to that of the *Führer*. In choosing this future, the people cannot, on the basis of so-called foreign policy considerations, cast a 'yes' vote without also including the *Führer* in this 'yes' and the movement that has pledged itself unconditionally to him. There are not separate foreign and domestic policies. There is only one will to the full existence of the state. The *Führer* has awakened this will in the entire people and has welded it into a single resolve. Nobody can remain away from the poll on the day when this will is manifested! (*Freiburger Studentenzeitung*, 10 November 1933)

It was in his Freiburg inaugural address ('What is Metaphysics?') that Heidegger spoke for the first time of the 'ultimate greatness' of *Dasein*, which consisted in the latter's willingness to expend itself without regard to consequences. Here he makes even greater use of the idea of 'heroic grandeur'. This applies to Schlageter's death no less than to Hitler's daring decision to make an audacious and surprise move that rendered meaningless all contractual relations and juridical principles. Yet this act was allegedly not an abandonment of the community of European nations; 'on the contrary', it alone established a true community, where each nation (on the German

model) exists on its own, discovering in this stance the true basis of 'mutuality'![15]

One week before this electoral appeal, Heidegger published a speech intended for the student body composed in very general terms (*Freiburger Studentenzeitung*, 3 November 1933), in which he claimed that the National Socialist revolution represented a 'total transformation of German *Dasein*'. It was up to the students, in their will to knowledge, to remain faithful to what is essential, simple and great; to be clear and sure in their refusals; to be engaged fighters and to fortify their courage in being ready to make sacrifices in order to save what is essential, and to enhance the strength of the *Volk*. It was not 'ideas' that should guide the existence of the students. Hitler alone should be their only law: 'The *Führer* alone *is* the German present and future reality and its law'.

Even before the revolution Heidegger was said to have remarked that Hitler, among all the *Reich* Chancellors standing for election, was the only one with a 'face'. Heidegger was deadly serious in his use of '*Heil Hitler*', and concluded even his private letters with it. This 'German greeting' was uttered by German citizens a thousand times over, just as greetings like '*Grüss Gott*' or '*Adieu*' had been before. One had to be a bit of a character, like my Munich cobbler, to return the entering customer's '*Heil Hitler*' greeting with '*Servus*'.

The philosophical definition of *Dasein* as an existing *factum brutum*, which 'is and must be' (*Sein und Zeit*, para. 29) – this sinister, active *Dasein*, stripped of all content, all beauty and human kindness – is a mirror-image of the 'heroic realism' of the Nazi-bred German faces that stared out at us from every magazine. In his lectures, Heidegger 'philosophized with a hammer', as Nietzsche had in the *Twilight of the Idols*, yet without the latter's brilliant psychological acumen. And while Nietzsche had proved his worth by maintaining an oppositional stance towards Bismarck's *Reich*, the 'highest free' decision of Heidegger's philosophy as expressed in his rectorate speech gave the sublime name of 'fate' to the *factum brutum* of contemporary German events.

The petty-bourgeois orthodoxy of the Party was suspicious of Heidegger's National Socialism in so far as Jewish and racial

considerations played no role. *Sein und Zeit* is dedicated to the Jew, Husserl, the book on Kant to the half-Jew, Scheler, and in his courses at Freiburg, Bergson and Simmel were taught. His spiritual concerns did not seem to conform to those of the 'Nordic race', which showed no fear in the face of nothingness (A. Hoberg, *Das Dasein des Menschen* [Human Existence], 1937). Conversely, Professor Hans Naumann did not hesitate to explain German mythology with the help of concepts from *Sein und Zeit*, discovering 'care' in Odin, and the 'they' in Baldur (*Germanischer Schicksalsglaube* [The German Faith in Fate], 1934). Yet neither the disdain nor the approval counts for much in itself. Heidegger's decision for Hitler went far beyond simple agreement with the ideology and programme of the Party. He was and remained a National Socialist - as did Ernst Jünger, who was certainly on the margins and isolated, but nevertheless far from being without influence. Heidegger's influence came through the *radicalism* with which he based the *freedom* of one's ownmost individual as well as German *Dasein* on the manifestation of the 'naught' [*des Nichts*] ('What is Metaphysics?', p. 20). Even today, Hitler's daring decision to risk a war for the sake of Danzig serves as a good illustration of Heidegger's philosophical concept of 'courage for fear' before nothingness - a paradox which captures the entire German situation in a nutshell.

Given the philosopher's significant attachment to the climate and intellectual habitus of National Socialism, it would be inappropriate to criticize or exonerate his political decision in isolation from the Party principles of Heidegger's philosophy itself. It is not Heidegger who, in opting for Hitler, 'misunderstood himself' (see H. Kunz's article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 3 January 1938); instead, those who cannot understand why he acted this way have failed to understand him. A Swiss professor (see the debate between K. Barth and E. Staiger in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, January 1936) regretted that Heidegger had consented to compromise himself with the 'everyday' - as if a philosophy that explains Being from the standpoint of time and the everyday would not stand in relation to the daily historical realities that govern its origins and effects. This admirer of Heidegger said that it was wrong to be offended by the 'historical contingency' of a body of thought instead of seeing

the 'white temple' that rises beyond it into 'timelessness'. But precisely as a Heidegger scholar one must retort that no philosopher besides Heidegger has orientated philosophy so much to the coincidence of 'historical facticity', and therefore necessarily incurred its penalty as soon as the decisive 'moment' had come. The possibility of Heidegger's political philosophy was born not as a result of a regrettable 'miscue', but from the very conception of existence that simultaneously combats and absorbs the 'spirit of the age'.

*The ultimate motivation of this will to revolution and awakening*, of this newly politicized youth movement from before the First World War, however, is to be found in *the awareness* of ruin and decline, in European nihilism. It is most significant that only a German, Nietzsche, had elevated 'European' nihilism to the rank of the principal philosophical theme, and that only in Germany was it able to take on a political form:

> The German, first and foremost, bears witness to the universal historical mission of radicalism . . . No one else is so inexorable and ruthless, for he does not merely limit himself to turning upside down a world that is already upright in order to remain upright himself, he turns himself upside down. . . . For the German, to destroy is to create, and the crushing of the temporal is his eternity. (Max Stirner, *Kleinere Schriften* [Shorter Works], 1842, p. 19)

Germans have no aptitude for the rational application of freedom within the bounds of human experience. It is not possible to understand the influence which Heidegger's philosophical corpus has exerted upon us apart from this will to destruction. I recall his letter of 1920 in which he stated that his work was in effect free of all concern for the alternative possibilities: whether a 'new culture' or '*an acceleration of decline*' will emerge from this destruction! The same line of thought recurs in *Sein und Zeit* (para. 77) when he agrees with a quotation stating that modern man – that is, post-Renaissance man – was 'ready' for burial. Similarly, the conclusion of his rectoral address of 1933 says that it is too late to transform old institutions, let alone add new ones. Instead one should return to the original beginnings of the Greeks in order to give Europe the chance of a fresh start.[16] But the danger, according to him, is that

the spiritual power of the West will dry up; that the West will come apart at the seams before we can decide in favour of this renewal, and that as a result 'this exhausted pseudo-culture will collapse, encompassing all that is still living in the disorder'. At that time, Heidegger still thought that whether we survived the collapse or not depended on 'whether we want ourselves, ourselves again and anew, or whether we no longer want ourselves'. He believed that the question had been decided positively already – namely, in the collective decision to follow Hitler.

Three years later, in 1936, in a lecture on Hölderlin, Heidegger concluded on a much more resigned note. He showed us, with Hölderlin, 'the era in which the gods have fled and that of the God to come'. The present, hemmed in by this double negative, the 'being-no-longer of the gods who have fled' and the 'not-yet' of the God to come, is essentially an impoverished and indigent era; it is no longer a question of the 'glorious' beginning of 1933. In such an era, the poet resists and perseveres in the nothingness of this night, an image that recalls the sombre conclusion of Max Weber's lecture ('Science as a Vocation', 1919). 'Of what use are poets in an impoverished era?' Heidegger too may have posed this question on many occasions: Of what use are philosophers in an impoverished era? To find an answer would undoubtedly be more difficult for him than for the poet himself for whom the gods were more than mere concepts of time.

The fascination that Heidegger has exerted over us as a result of his Resolve devoid of content and his ruthlesss critique has endured. It is now twenty years since I first went to Freiburg, but even today he manages to captivate the listener by the enigmatic nature of his intensive lecturing, and the influence of his teaching can still be felt everywhere.

## *Heidegger's Personality*

In 1926, shortly before my habilitation in Marburg, I wrote an honest and emotional account of the impression that Heidegger's personality made on me, and I include this character sketch here with minor additions. We nicknamed Heidegger 'the little magician

from Messkirch'. He was strikingly small of stature; he came from the most humble background in the village of Messkirch, and completed his studies under severe privations. The Jesuit monastery of Feldkirch had shaped his youth 'between the millstones of theology'. I shall always remember his gesture and look when he once showed me a photograph of a priest and said: '*He* had us under his thumb!' It was the hard and sharp face of an ascetic priest on his deathbed. Heidegger's origins in reduced circumstances could not be mistaken even later on. When I called on him in his rector's office in 1933, he sat forlorn, morose and ill at ease in the large elegant room, and one sensed his discomfort in his commands and movements. He himself further provoked this distance by his unconventional dress. He wore a kind of Black Forest farmer's jacket with broad lapels and a semi-militaristic collar, and knee-length breeches, both made from dark-brown cloth – a 'one's ownmost' style of dress, which was supposed to antagonize the 'they' and amused us then, but at that time we did not recognize it as a peculiar temporary compromise between the conventional suit and the uniform of the SA. The brown colour of the cloth went well with his jet-black hair and his dark complexion.

He was a small dark man who knew how to perform conjuring tricks by making disappear what he had just presented to the listener. His lecturing method consisted in constructing an edifice of ideas, which he himself then dismantled again so as to baffle fascinated listeners, only to leave them up in the air.[17] This art of enchantment sometimes had the most disturbing effects in that it attracted more or less psychopathic personalities, and one female student committed suicide three years after such guessing games.

Heidegger's face can be described only with difficulty, because he was never able to look at us directly or openly for long. The natural expression of his countenance can be described as a working forehead, a veiled face and downcast eyes, which only from time to time checked on the situation by looking up for a second. If one forced him to look directly at one during a conversation, his expression would become reserved and unsteady because he denied himself sincerity in his communication with others. Conversely, what did come naturally to him was the expression of a cautious and shrewd peasant's distrust. He did not employ gestures in his

lectures, nor empty phrases, he looked at his manuscript with concentration and talked into a vacuum. His sole rhetorical device was an ingenious soberness and the thesis-type rigour of a construction that was calculated to create suspense. His face then became very expressive with the apparent effect of concentration and his plain but interesting asymmetries. The clouded forehead, interlaced with a very prominent vein, expressed his whole animation; we could see it working, of its own accord, without consideration for the audience that was aroused rather than addressed. He stood on the podium in conscious isolation while reading and turning page after page with a sureness of manner that had become part of a routine. At Heidegger's final Marburg lecture, students had placed a bouquet of white roses on his lectern. As usual he entered with eyes downcast, climbing the rostrum to give his final lecture with bitter reluctance in the already rather empty large auditorium. Nothing was more out of place than the roses, which he ignored in his irritation.

Fascinated by the energetic earnestness of this small great man, whom we had called the 'saga of time' ever since *Sein und Zeit* was published, I spent many years in the fruitless effort to establish a human relationship with a person whose life was defensively shut off from personal commitments, and who only in his encapsulated lecture chose to address 'everyone and no one' by telling us with his concepts what he could not and would not say to any individual face to face. His knowledge reached precisely as far as the distrust from which it originated. The fruit of this distrust was a masterful critique of the existing tradition. His scholarly education was entirely first-hand. His library was not a book collection but limited to those classical works he had studied thoroughly from the days of his youth. He was as familiar with the fundamental works of Antiquity as with those of the Middle Ages and the modern age, but he loathed sociology and psychoanalysis. His boundless criticism of all cultural and educational activities both attracted and repelled us, while he himself suspiciously guarded the entrance and exit of his foxhole in which, however, he felt by no means at ease. He suffered from his self-imposed isolation and often attempted to extend his social network, only immediately to retreat into himself and to find escape in work which hardened and stiffened his basically sensitive and impressionable nature.

In social origin a simple verger's son, through his profession he became the exalted representative of a class which he rejected as such. He was a Jesuit by education, and became a Protestant in protest; a scholastic dogmatist by schooling, and an existential pragmatist by experience; a theologian by tradition, and an atheist as a scholar; a renegade of his tradition in the guise of the historian. Existentially like Kierkegaard, with a systemic will like Hegel; as dialectical in method as shallow in content; one making apodeictic claims from the spirit of negation; taciturn towards others but inquisitive like few others; ultimately radical, but always tending towards compromise in everything less ultimate. This is the ambiguous influence this man had over his students who, in turn, remained none the less fascinated by him because he by far surpassed all other university philosophers in his intense philosophical will.

## *Dr B.'s 'Awakening' in Reverse*

Among Heidegger's first students, Dr B. stood out in maturity and intelligence. He had already completed his studies before the war, and arrived in Freiburg at the same time as I to join Husserl; here he came under Heidegger's influence. As a person, however, he was in every aspect the reverse of our teacher: sophisticated, frail, in poor health and imbued with modernity. The contrast was immediately apparent if one compared both styles of handwriting. Heidegger's script covers the page with regular, disciplined, clearly rectangular and unwavering, sharply simplified strokes of the pen. B.'s handwriting scatters unsteadily in all directions and symbolizes a lack of effort of will and vital energy. The same contrast applies to the basis of B.'s philosophical Nazism: he was not in immediate and direct touch with his real existence; his 'awakening' was no more than a reaction to his essential fragility.

B. came from a cultivated and wealthy family (his father had been a landowner near Leipzig), but he did not care to uphold its old bourgeois traditions. His marriage, for which I was engaged as a witness to the ceremony, symbolised this: he neglected every aspect of bourgeois Christian custom on purpose. One morning we went

together to Freiburg railway station, where he asked a porter to act as the essential second witness at the marriage ceremony in return for 5 Marks. This porter was the only one who appeared at the Registry Office in tails, whereas we wore our ordinary suits. There was no church ceremony. The wedding celebration simply consisted of having lunch on this occasion at one of the better restaurants instead of the university refectory.

Subsequently the couple moved into their gloomy two-room flat and led an academic proletarian life for years, until B. finally succeeded in his habilitation under Husserl and inherited Heidegger's assistant post after the latter's departure for Marburg. Later still he managed to obtain a chair in Bonn, where he teaches until this day with little enthusiasm and drive. When he first met her, his wife was influenced by the German youth movement; she was expressionistic and very independent, highly neurotic and close to losing her will to live. Instead of eating she would smoke innumerable cigarettes and drink black coffee. *Danziger Goldwasser* (a traditional liqueur from Danzig) was also a fitting part of our almost daily philosophical sessions, with discussions extending late into the night, and thus we spent many happy hours in this small circle of friends.

B. attracted attention because of his tall bent shape, stooping shoulders and the oddly lopsided gait with which he shuffled along in a kind of sideways and half-hearted fashion. On his long neck sat an extraordinarily big head with a high and fine forehead, which led down to a slender nose, a sensual mouth and a small weak chin. The look in his mild eyes was thoughtful and resigned; his hands were delicate and expressive. His whole personality exuded sensitivity, scepticism, amorality and intelligence. He always avoided firm decisions. His appearance contrasted so sharply with that of a typical SA man, which would later fill him with so much enthusiasm, that he personally was not aware of how comical it seemed.

B. was well-read, with a preference for erotic French literature. His interest in Kierkegaard, too, did not extend beyond the *Diary of the Seducer*. He had studied the Marquis de Sade and Réstif de la Bretonne as thoroughly as he studied Plato and Aristotle. His scholarly interests were very broad: he mastered the fundamental

principles of advanced mathematics and physics, which he conceived of as a kind of aesthetic game. He had an extensive knowledge of aesthetics and art history, and he was as familiar with Freud's psychoanalysis as any expert. He also studied Sanskrit and Chinese.

Initially his interest in the study of race was apolitical. It was combined with his inclination towards the philosophy of nature, to anything unconscious and instinctive, which he sought to develop conceptually as the primordial '*Dawesen*' (essence-of-being-there), in contrast to Heidegger's *Dasein*. He was interested only in the scientific aspect of Heidegger's lectures, while their personal and emotional claims remained utterly foreign to him. He accepted Heidegger's interpretation of Greek philosophy, whereas he was indifferent to his Christian theology. He shared my conviction that Nietzsche was the 'last philosopher' because Spengler was 'right in a crude way – but nevertheless right'. After 1933 B. changed his mind about Spengler: National Socialism, to him, seemed a kind of 'gay science' and a triumph over nihilism. This was why good old Spengler was now finished: 'we have become fed up with the harbinger of blind fate and his eternal prophecies of doom are now boring us'. This was a 'we' and 'us' that B. had never previously used, and it was intended to signify: we, the Party of Youth, to which the future belongs and which is marching under Hitler's banners. (B. was about forty-five years old when he joined this 'youth movement'.)

Flaubert and Baudelaire, Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard, but also existentialist philosophy, with its concern for its 'self' – all that was now, fortunately, irrelevant because one no longer needed to worry about one's individual 'soul' once a new 'type', an eidos, of form of life was gaining the upper hand. By 'life' he meant primarily Nietzsche's Dionysiac concept of life from the *Will to Power*, and by 'type' what Ernst Jünger contrasted with bourgeois individualism in his book *Die Gestalt des Arbeiters* [The Character of the Worker], published in 1932). He argued that although it was wrong to adopt Nietzsche in every respect for the National Socialist cause, time itself had interpreted him in this way, just as youth now understood him – namely, as a new beginning which held a future because he was leading them away from Christianity. According to him, the

rhythm of eternally recurring life in Nietzsche's Dionysus-dithyramb was identical with the 'will to power' as a fundamental form of life, and 'by relating it to the present one could concretely say in the terms employed by youth, that it is also in tune with the marching rhythm of the brown battalions'! This transition from Nietzsche's poems to the marching step of the SA was made not by some young SA student, but by a professor of philosophy. This constitutes a proof that even the most subtle education cannot protect one from the crudest aberrations once the intellect has abdicated in favour of blood and soil. But even for this B. immediately had a scientific justification to hand. In 1932 he wrote to me that political movements and decisions were to a large extent carried out in the 'unconscious', and hence one should not be amazed if even the least prejudiced and intelligent people became strangely illogical and dense as soon as they started talking politics.

A letter that B. sent to me two months before the Nazi takeover is a faithful expression of the general situation of the German intelligentsia immediately before their co-ordination. He wrote that, after all, we shared the common feeling that the 'bourgeois epoch' was coming to an end, and had to lead to something new. Jaspers's philosophy of 'failure' was, in its way, an almost classical expression for the end of the bourgeois ideal of security. In the midst of this dissolution of all concepts and order, accelerated by war and inflation, he saw in Hitler's movement the future, although he did not understand the Third Reich in 'politically realist' terms, nor in the 'fairly embarrassing form of the actual Party', but as an 'idea'. But even the misuse of the political 'myth' was 'not to be roundly' condemned, because at least it expressed a genuine insight into the real forces of a people's political life.

Beyond that B. agreed with political propaganda in that he identified any kind of 'liberalism' with so-called 'Marxism', although he had never studied it. But it was due to this lack of knowledge that he was all the more confident that the real enemy of the German uprising was Marxism. He did not realize that it was precisely Marx who had proclaimed the end of the bourgeois epoch, and made such anti-Marxisms possible in the first place. Like virtually all German academics, he could not and would not comprehend that 'Marxism' had become a political reality in Germany only

through National Socialist anti-Marxism. Neither did he agree with my rejoinder that National Socialism was a 'petty-bourgeois' movement and a revolt of the proletarianized middle classes, and therefore by no means the end of the bourgeois epoch but, rather, its vulgarization by a mass democratic dictatorship. According to him, this was a 'sociological' category which originated in Marx, while Hitler had abolished Marxism in Germany for good.

The first news I had from B. after the Nazi takeover, which he called an 'uprising', expressed the kindly hope that I, as an ex-serviceman, would not be dismissed by the university. But, of course, it was unavoidable that such radical change 'would cause fine china to be broken'. By 'fine china' he meant the German Jews. My sharp retort made him feel that he owed me a detailed explanation. He said that he was not referring to me when he was talking about fine china, but to those who had already been dismissed, and even then 'not actually to the people, but their (now partly lost) contribution to German science and art'. He was not able to feel a sense of outrage at these measures because, while he did not want to claim that they were laudable, they had none the less been absolutely essential to remove the overwhelming Jewish influence on German culture. If it had been avoidable, Hitler would have been sure not to have taken 'this burden of our foreign policy' upon himself. He personally felt no particular hatred for Jews but considered them as an objective danger, and he saw their growing influence as emanating predominantly from the 'German Jews' (by whom he meant the democrats of the Weimar system). The uprising, in contrast, signalled a break with Marxist and liberal economics, and simultaneously with the fatalistic belief in the final banishment of the gods from the world and nihilism. The time of 'destruction' was over, and 'the *Führer*' – wrote the most sensitive eccentric I have ever known – rightly said: 'I take away your past and give you the future!' And this would be worth all the fine china in the world!

## *The Spirit and Christianity are an Anachronism in Germany*

When I had been dismissed and was living in Rome, B. wrote to me in February 1936 expressing deep regret that I had been forced to

leave Marburg for good and the feeling that I had been treated very unfairly because I had, after all, rendered outstanding services to contemporary Germany both during the war as a soldier and during peacetime as a scholar. By the latter he implied that my philosophical work on the development from Hegel to Nietzsche arose from the recognition that the bourgeois-Christian epoch had been over since 1830. After all, I had myself chosen the theme of the self-dissolution of the Hegelian 'spirit', and he was therefore unable to understand why I was now none the less still holding on to the conception of the 'spirit'.

It is fair to say that my own position on German development was not crystal-clear at that time, and it was only my book on Burckhardt (1935–6) that set me free from Nietzsche and the consequences of German radicalism. For B. the case had already been settled in the new German sense. He wrote that the 'spirit' as the last resort of philosophy 'in Germany' was an 'anachronism', and this was a legitimate outcome of the last century. Only now was it possible to realize that fully. Just like the 'spirit', Christianity was now obviously dead as well. Today's younger generation was no longer 'wrestling' with God or for the faith. For this generation Christ was no problem at all – it did not hate him; rather, it was completely indifferent to him. Christianity was in fact finished – which is indeed also a view shared by Heidegger today.

Nor did anyone but 'a few elderly gentlefolk' now get worked up about Heidegger's 'nothingness'. One remembered the nihilistic epoch (which B. dated from 1923 to 1933) as if it were a long-deceased person – that is, very rarely and without emotion. The reason for this was that a 'new faith' had been fought for and won that lacked any continuity with Judaic-Oriental Christianity. It was the 'simple and plain' faith in Germany, and because of its simplicity it confounded any analysis! One did not engage in dialectical subtleties and analyses – only those who were still 'between the times' were doing that, B. wrote in complete agreement and with satisfaction, although his whole intellectual existence consisted of such 'subtleties'. He claimed that if I were to attempt to keep the audience in suspense with the well-tested methods of destruction now, I would fail, because the locks to the human soul had been changed overnight and my key would no longer be able to

open them. Germany had 'awakened' from the nihilistic night, and youth had made the leap from the whole of Christianity 'to something old, natural and pagan'. This new German paganism was no longer wrapped in a mythological cloak, as it had been in Nietzsche, but in the ever-present uniform of the SA trooper with steel helmet and rifle. The turbulent age following Nietzsche had devoured Christianity, together with the spirit. In such times it was not important what the individual did or thought, but whether he was an exponent of the movement behind which stood the faith of German youth.

When I sent B. a critical review of a newly published book by the National Socialist philosopher Hans Heyse (*Idee und Existenz* [Idea and Existence], 1936), he replied that I should not criticize particular aspects of this kind of book, but should rather consider it as an expression of another era, because Heyse, too, was no more than an 'ordinary soldier' at the German front. What I felt to be primitive in such books was, rather, elemental, and it was precisely the loss of problems that represented an essential gain in the new National Socialist way of thinking. But the main losses were the questions regarding individual existence or – religiously speaking – the interest in spiritual salvation. Augustine's '*quaestio mihi factus sum*' (I have examined myself) was no longer voiced by anyone today, but one indeed raised questions about the natural foundations of *völkisch* life: about soil, race, region and blood. Even Heidegger's and Jaspers's philosophical achievements had to be considered from racial viewpoints. In Jaspers's philosophy of 'existence' and 'transparency', 'the Nordic solitude and pull into the infinite distance and immeasurable depth' lived as the authentic motive, but it was denied a grasp of what primarily moved the German present. Only Heyse had succeeded in grasping that, and to him, 'the pioneer of the Nordic spirit in German philosophy', B. dedicated an effusive review in an issue of the *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde* (Journal for Racial Studies), which naturally did not prevent time from devouring this pompous and clumsy piece of work within the short space of a year.[18] B. was not altogether clear about Heidegger's racial origins, but he believed that they must be an unfortunate blend of genuine Nordic features with more than a hint of Dinaric ones from the Near East.

An essay on 'Nordische Metaphysik', which appeared in the journal *Rasse* (Race) in 1938, was the last item of mail I received from B. It begins with the bold claim that metaphysics was 'exclusively' a Nordic possibility and the 'Nordic fate' of the individual, the race, the *Volk*. Metaphysics, therefore, was no more than an 'expression of the Nordic claim to the world', so its characteristic qualities were those of the Nordic soul, which B. (following F. Clauss, who had studied under Husserl at the same time as us) described as follows:

> an infinite depth of vision, a striding out into the infinite distance and unfathomable depth, an abhorrence of the flat and smooth surface of the finite arrangements lying before us, a mistrust of all 'finally settled questions'. It was the love for free air-space, the shaded blue of the distance, for the storm and the storm tide, which always churns up everything afresh and undermines all the foundation walls. However, this is combined with an unrestrained will for clear achievement, which is accomplished in the thing itself, and a loathing for the sound of empty words on which the Mediterranean person tends to get intoxicated. It is not for the sake of performing a powerful drama that the great Greek and German metaphysicians built their edifices of ideas but to explore the first and last things as they actually are.

Subsequently he quotes from Heraclitus, 'the old Nordic thinker of the early Greek period'. In conclusion the Nordic fate is then compared with the Christian consciousness of sinning:

> On the one hand, overweening pride [*Hybris*] and delusion [*Ate*] – on the other, the 'Potential for sinning' [*posse peccare*], or even the 'Potential for nothing but sinning' [*non posse non peccare*]. The Nordic fate is: violence and destruction; to go knowingly into death; choosing one's own destiny; and after this first fundamental decision, an unswerving loyalty to oneself. An honourable death even for the steadfast sinner. The Near Eastern fate is given by 'predestination'. God predetermines who will be sinful and damned, who will be pardoned and saved. Inescapable eternal damnation, remorse and futile repentance. Ceaseless

> anguish and the disgrace of the damned. The redemption through Christ becomes apparent as exception only given this background.

But unfortunately fate had not granted the Teutons (just imagine B. as a sinning Teuton!) the opportunity to construct their philosophy purely in accordance with their nature. They succumbed to Christian conversion, and so the spiritual history of the West is taken up with the battle against the 'near Eastern (Judaic-Christian) poison'. But Germanness was not Teutonic in the Christian mould; it was only wearing a Christian mask, and this façade was now fading for the salvation of the German-Teutonic nature, which would help Europe to recover – whether it wanted to or not. For either National Socialism would succeed in renewing this fading world, or Germany and Europe would be irrevocably finished.

I have heard this typical alternative for the contemporary Germans, radicalized by war, inflation and revolution, in precisely the same terms from the German specialist Hans Naumann. He too put everything on the one remaining card in the consciousness that failing that everything would be lost. Similarly, Ernst Bertram, in his speech on 'The German Awakening', argued that if *this* struggle fails, as Germany is fighting not only for itself but for the whole European world, it will signal 'the end of the white world, chaos or the planet of termites'. Heyse equally claims that 'If the Reich fails in its mission, there will no longer be a people that has the power to save the most essential meaning of history'. Ernst Jünger phrased it more sceptically when he wrote that one had to fight the nihilistic act of war, whose outcome would be the uprooting of the European, to its essentially bitter end, and German hopes were to be tied only to 'what remains' (*Das abenteuerliche Herz* [The Adventurous Heart], Berlin 1929, p. 186 ff.).

No less characteristic than B.'s Nordic thesis, which he defended as apodeictically as the new world-view, however, was his complete failure privately to dispute the fact that the whole cultural policy of the Third Reich was 'the weakest part' of German renewal. In 1936 he wrote that there was indeed little prospect that this would change because there was no outstanding personality who could master these tasks, and everything that went beyond

organizational questions remained an unresolved problem. The Minister of Culture, Rust, was no more than 'feeble average', Krieck a 'complacent idiot', the race scholar Günther a 'pseudo-important figure' and everything but a scholar; relatively speaking, Baeumler was still the most capable of them all.

Again and again I encountered both the approval of National Socialism as a whole and the rejection of it in precisely those areas that were bound to be matters of professional concern. One appreciated the positive things that National Socialism had accomplished, while abstracting the 'weakest sides' for which one was responsible oneself. If one asked an artist, for example, the answer would be: the new species-specific art was indeed deplorable, '*but*' the new motorways were wonderful and the economic regeneration was tremendous. Thus the academic world, too, was consoling itself with the progress made outside the areas for which it was solely responsible and about which it was able to make judgements.

When my book on Burckhardt was published in 1936, B. referred to it in a letter, saying that he indeed found much that was beautiful, amusing and nice in Burckhardt, but fundamentally he was none the less merely a 'grumbler of stature'. He quite liked his apolitical stance and the old bourgeois culture; he too had sometimes dreamed of being born in Basle instead of Leipzig so as to lead a patrician existence untouched by the turn of events, but this was a thing of the past, and not even desirable. He himself had led a similar life from the age of eighteen to the age of twenty-five – until 1 August 1914. But he had to add that he had never felt as unhappy as precisely during that prewar period.

In this confession the authentic B. still speaks to me the most, but admittedly he does not know that the new German pathos of the post-Hitlerian reviews from his lips is, in Nietzsche's words, a 'life-sustaining illusion'.

## *B.'s Position on the Jewish Question*

As far as B.'s personal relationship with me was concerned, he assured me repeatedly that it 'naturally' had not changed as a result

of public events. He would always be willing 'not to place further emphasis on the fact that I was of part-Jewish descent'. (He mistakenly believed that I was only a half-Jew, while I am actually three-quarters Jewish and never could nor would want to prove the Aryan quarter on account of my father's illegitimate birth.) He felt justified in holding this liberal view because I had never emphasized my Jewishness even before Hitler, and perceived myself as German. My father was essentially German in his nature and looks, only the smallest minority of my friends were Jewish, my wife was German and connections with my mother's relatives were by now virtually non-existent. My life was wholly based on 'emancipation', and I was instinctively more sensitive to Jews than were many naive Germans.

However, B. denied on principle precisely what I stood for from the beginning: the emancipation of Jews to Germanness. While he wanted to maintain an unaltered relationship with me, he very decidedly rejected any relations with Jews as a whole. When I was in Japan, he wrote: 'Perhaps even contemporary German Jews still have a relationship with Germanness, though it may be one of enmity; but contemporary Germans have absolutely no relationship with Jews, be it one of enmity or friendship; rather they are completely indifferent to Jews now, i.e. since the "*Entjudung*" (de-Jewishification)'! The fight against Jewishness was now over and could no longer interest anyone. Neither would he read the books by Erich von Kahler and Helmuth Plessner (two Jewish emigrants) that I had recommended to him. On the contrary, they were rightly prohibited because it was politically quite absurd 'to sow doubts in the soul of the German'! He was writing all this to me because *I* was, after all, no 'emigrant', but a half-Jew who just happened to be affected by the general laws, and would no doubt be able to understand both sides.

This is how matter-of-fact the political zoology of racial percentages had become for the intellectual B. He could not allow any general human consideration to develop with reference to the Jewish question, because it was 'trivial'. He did not have the least difficulty in making a distinction between his 'personal' relations with Jews and the 'objective' necessities of National Socialist policy, to which he referred partly as an 'idea' and partly

as a 'fact' – according to requirement. Thus he was never able to understand why I sided with the underdog after the German 'uprising', and why I perceived the utter indifference to the fate of Jews to be more hostile than the personal hatred of a Hitler or a Streicher. For him, this remained a puzzle that he was unable to solve with percentages. Yet at the same time B. was – particularly on this point – only one of thousands of 'ordinary' Germans who combined their opposition to Jews on principle with their Jewish friendships by means of a cheap distinction. A letter of 1937 ended our philosophical and friendly correspondence, but not the memory of those Freiburg years during which we had daily get-togethers and enjoyed a lively exchange that neither B. nor I will ever experience again.

During those Freiburg years after the war I had gained a teacher and many friends whom I cannot strike out of my present life. Externally it was a time of hardship, full of insecurity, trouble and unrest, but at the same time one of the greatest open-mindedness, informality and independence, during which young people still sought their own paths and individualities found each other. We had returned from the war eager for intellectual stimulation which, in our opinion, we had found at the universities, despite their many shortcomings. Even Heidegger confessed to me at a later stage that he never again had such a circle of students. We were *the last free student generation* that had not been levelled down and geared to speedy examinations. Our fathers had still been able to provide the opportunity of a course of study that was worthy of its name. All that changed with inflation. Universities were faced with a massive influx because they were relatively cheap escape routes from imminent unemployment, because this path was paved with heavy reductions and subsidies. When I habilitated in Marburg in 1928, there were indeed still a gratifying number of students who were concerned with themselves and their subject matter, but the majority was already an academic proletariat and, as such, fertile ground for forced political assimilation. The growth in numbers became a gauge for levelling down, because teachers' demands on the students decreased in proportion with the loss of individuality in teaching.

## *My Final Meeting with Husserl in Freiburg in 1933 and with Heidegger in Rome in 1936*

In 1933, for the last time, I spent two days in Freiburg and attended Heidegger's lecture. He was just in the process of analysing different types of silence, for which he had a profound sense and expertise. He invited me to his house for supper; his wife was not in. Our conversation avoided all sensitive issues and was limited to the question whether I should give up Marburg and follow up the chance of a post in Istanbul. He invited me to spend the night in his house, and seemed a little surprised when I declined and instead went to stay with a former student friend who taught in the medical faculty.

The following day I visited Husserl. Heidegger had completely divorced himself from him and had never again visited his 'fatherly friend' (the stereotypical address of his letters) after the Nazi takeover. Husserl was mildly and calmly absorbed in his work, but deeply hurt by the conduct of his former student, who was indebted to him for his succession to the Freiburg chair, and had now become rector of the university.

While I was in Rome in 1936, Heidegger gave a lecture on Hölderlin at the Italian-German Cultural Institute. Afterwards, he accompanied me to our flat and was visibly taken aback by our scanty furnishings. He was particularly struck by the absence of my library, which was still in Germany. In the evening I saw him to his lodgings in the Hertziana, where his wife greeted me with stiffly polite reserve. She was probably embarrassed to be reminded of how often I used to be a guest in their house. The Director of the Institute had invited us for supper in the Osso bucco, and we avoided political topics.

The next day, my wife and I made an excursion to Frascati and Tusculum with Heidegger, his wife and their two sons, whom I had often looked after when they were little. It was a gloriously sunny day, and I was happy about this final get-together, despite the undeniable reservations. Even on this occasion, Heidegger did not remove his Party insignia from his lapel. He wore it during his entire stay in Rome, and it had obviously not occurred to him that the swastika was out of place while he was spending the day with

me. We talked about Italy, Freiburg and Marburg, but also about philosophical topics. He was friendly and attentive, yet avoided any allusion to the situation in Germany and his view of it, as did his wife.

On our way back, I tried to induce him to comment freely on it. I turned the conversation to the controversy in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, and explained that I agreed neither with Barth's political attack nor with Staiger's defence, in so far as I was of the opinion that his partisanship for National Socialism lay in the essence of his philosophy. Heidegger agreed with me without reservation, and added that his concept of 'historicity' formed the basis of his political 'engagement'. He also left no doubt about his belief in Hitler. He had underestimated only two things: the vitality of the Christian Churches, and the obstacles to the annexation of Austria. He was convinced now, as before, that National Socialism was the right course for Germany; one had only to 'hold out' long enough. The only aspect that troubled him was the ceaseless 'organization' at the expense of 'vital forces'. He failed to notice the destructive radicalism of the whole movement and the petty-bourgeois character of all its 'strength-through-joy' [*Kraft-durch-Freude*] institutions, because he was a radical petty bourgeois himself.

In response to my remark that there were many things I could understand about his attitude, except how he could sit down at the same table (at the Academy of German Law) with someone like Julius Streicher, he remained silent at first. Then, reluctantly, that well-known justification followed, which Karl Barth had excellently summarized in his 'Theological Existence Today'. He said that things would have been 'much worse yet' if at least a few intelligent people had not become involved. And with bitter feelings of resentment against the 'intelligentsia', he concluded his explanation with the words: 'If these gentlemen had not been too refined to get involved, then everything would be different; but, instead, I am entirely alone now.' To my retort that one did not have to be especially 'refined' in order to renounce working with Streicher, he replied that one need not waste words over Streicher; *Der Stürmer*, after all, was no more than pornography. He said that he could not understand why Hitler did not get rid of this fellow; maybe Hitler was scared of him.

These responses were typical because nothing is easier for Germans than to be radical when it comes to ideas, and to be indifferent to facts. They manage to ignore *all individual facts* in order to cling all the more decisively to their *concept of the whole*, and to separate 'matters of fact' from 'persons'.[19] In truth, the programme of that 'pornography' was fulfilled in every last detail and became German reality in November 1938; and nobody can deny that Streicher and Hitler were in total agreement on this matter.

I never received a line of thanks, never mind an objective comment, either for the mailed copy of my book on Burckhardt or for the book on Nietzsche which had appeared the year before. I wrote to Heidegger from Japan on two further occasions: the first time on a matter of personal interest to him – the translation of *Sein und Zeit* into Japanese; the second time about a few rare works which I had given him as a present and was then temporarily in need of. The response to both letters was silence. Thus ended my relationship with a man who, in 1929, was responsible for my habilitation as the only one of his Marburg students.

Husserl died in Freiburg in 1938. Heidegger proved his 'admiration and friendship' (the terms in which he dedicated his work to Husserl in 1927) by wasting no words of remembrance or sympathy, either public or private, spoken or written. Similarly, B., who owed his entire philosophical 'existence' to Husserl – from his habilitation to his professorial appointment in Bonn – escaped his embarrassment by not reacting for the 'simple' reason that his teacher was a dismissed Jew, while he was an Aryan civil servant. From the time Hitler took over, this heroism had become the standard behaviour of those Germans who owed their position to a German Jew. But Heidegger and B. probably perceived their conduct as no more than 'honest' and 'logical'. What else could they do in their embarrassment?

## *My Friends from the Freiburg Student Period*

The contact with the friends I had made in Freiburg – most of them younger men than I, who had not fought in the war – became

sparser with the passage of time and with distance. I am now corresponding with only two of them: Walther Marseille and Afra Geiger, neither of whom is now in Germany. Marseille, who had obtained his Ph.D. under Heidegger and became a psychoanalyst, had left Germany of his own free will (he was not under pressure on either racial or political grounds) as early as 1933. He went to Vienna and married a Jewish girl, which was quite out of tune with the era. I last saw him at the Prague Congress in 1934. In Freiburg we were both friends of Afra Geiger who was not able to complete her studies and instead found employment in a Berlin business. Since her employer was a Jew and she was half-Jewish they were forced to leave Germany and move the business to Holland, where they are supporting numerous emigrant relatives.

Gerda Walter, a passionate girl of Danish origin, was Husserl's private secretary in 1919. She later devoted herself to parapsychology, spiritualism and astrology. We never met again after 1931. The Pietist Martin Thust, who had also studied under Husserl, had become a pastor in Silesia after the publication of an excellent book on Kierkegaard. Heinrich Besseler habilitated in musical theory at Freiburg and became professor in Heidelberg. I last saw him in Rome in 1935. He has not remained the promising young man he once was, nor has he matured. His development was arrested by ambition and his early adaptation to the demands of the job. His conversation with me about the German situation was conventional and irresponsible. He disregarded all the more serious questions, and I therefore consigned the enjoyable period of our almost daily exchanges to the past. Fritz Kaufmann, an older Husserl student who had habilitated in Freiburg, was a Jew and left Germany. He was the type of rigorously ethical Jew who was distant from nature, yet highly educated, disciplined and sophisticated. Even before 1933 Charlotte Grosser had saved her beautiful but broken soul by taking refuge in the Catholic Church. Her final message shortly after the Nazi takeover indicated that her 'papers were in order', which no doubt meant that her half-Jewish origins were not officially known. At the end of her woeful path, which led her from Buschor and Greek archaeology to Karl Barth's theology, she is probably lost without trace to worldly eyes in the silent

darkness of a convent. The story of her inner life was closely intertwined with the troubles of the period.

The external events of my own life between 1919 and 1928 can be briefly summarized as follows: university studies, the doctorate in 1923, inflation and accepting a post as private tutor on a landed estate in Mecklenburg (1923–4), escape from the times to Italy (1924–5), return to Marburg (1925), and the period leading up to my habilitation (1928).

## *The Withering Away of All Existing Things through Inflation*

When I started work on my PhD thesis in 1922, Heidegger was still a lecturer; and hence he was unable to confer a doctorate on me. I went to Munich and submitted my thesis to Moritz Geiger. At that time Germany was undergoing universal devaluation – not only of money, but of all values – and the National Socialist 'revaluation' was a result of that. After the war, inflation was the second most important phenomenon that created the conditions for the revolution: through the withering away of all existing things and the ensuing radicalization of social and political life. It heralded the end of bourgeois security and the loss of bourgeois property in a dangerous game that only the state could win. There was hardly a German family whose foundations were not undermined or swept away.

Within a few months my father had lost his savings after four decades of hard work during which he had worked his way up from being a hungry scholarship-holder to bourgeois affluence. He lost the proceeds from selling the villa at Lake Starnberg after the war, his wife's dowry, the life insurance he had taken out for her (because he was no longer in a position to continue paying the premiums), and the German war loan to which he was heavily subscribed. I found a small packet containing thirty brown thousand-Mark notes with his will. He had kept them in the naive belief that one day they might regain their nominal value. I handed them in at a bank where they bought them at the collector's value of 10 Pfennigs each. From my grandfather I had personally inherited 30,000 Marks which were invested in shares and worth a mere 3 Marks by the end of the inflationary period. My monthly salary as private

tutor in Mecklenburg amounted to a (metrical) hundredweight of rye, the monetary value of which roughly equalled five cigars almost immediately after it was paid out.

At the same time, social conditions had changed radically. Old and well situated families were impoverished overnight, while young have-nots acquired great wealth through bank speculation. The buyers of my father's paintings were no longer the rich distinguished businessmen of the Wilhelminian era but major industrialists, speculators and shoe manufacturers who wanted to invest their money in material assets. Even the four-year war did less to loosen morality and the whole fabric of social life than this raging turmoil, which eroded people's foundations anew every day, and instilled a desperate daring and unscrupulousness in the younger generation. It was only this grotesque occurrence that laid bare the true significance of the war: the total overspending and destruction resulting in the zeros of the inflationary period and the Thousand-Year Reich. The virtues of the German bourgeoisie were swept away then, and this dirty torrent bore the movement which formed around Hitler.

## *As a Private Tutor in Mecklenburg*

So that I should not be a further burden on my father, I applied at this time for the post of private tutor in the North. I already had some experience, because I had interrupted my Freiburg studies for a semester in order to give lessons to the two sons of a major Jewish industrialist at their home in nearby Baden-Baden. Now, for the first time, Castle Kogel gave me an insight into the condition of the rural nobility in Northern Germany. There one still lived in the style of a minor princely household of a century ago, with many liveried servants and countless kitchen staff. Time passed in a perpetual cycle of reciprocal invitations from the neighbouring landed gentry. The occasions for such festivities were births and deaths, engagements, marriages and baptisms, hunts and riding tournaments. An estate manager took care of the business side. He, his secretary and I were the only commoners; besides us there were only princes and barons, earls, chamberlains and baronets with their

diverse heraldic orders. Before the meals one thanked the Lord for the 'daily bread', which consisted of honeycombs, eels, breasts of goose, giant carps, roast meat and gâteaux. The castle library was less well-endowed: the Gotha aristocratic calendar and some Ullstein novels were all I could find besides a volume of Schiller and Körner. In each guest room the standard items were a Protestant hymn book and the *Kreuzzeitung*.*

Oddly enough, nobody objected to my employment on account of my Jewish name. It sufficed that I did not come from Berlin, the hated Jewish city, and was a Protestant. There was only the remotest interest in Hitler. In the main they were monarchist and anti-Catholic. In the morning I gave lessons to a thirteen-year old boy. For the rest of the time I was completely free and enjoyed the beauty of the estate, where they lived in abundance in the midst of inflation and settled the annual tax bill by selling an ox. When I left Kogel after nine months, I travelled to Munich and put my affairs in order for the journey to Rome.

## *The Escape from the Times to Italy*

On boarding the train to Verona, I left Germany, inflation and politics behind me. I cheered up and recovered my senses in the South during the *anno santo*. Charlotte Grosser had left me her job in a bookshop, so I managed to get by initially. Later on a friendly uncle sent me some money. I thoroughly enjoyed the unpretentious and cheerful life in Rome, where I lived in a small boarding-house in the 'Borgo pio', near St Peter's. I made contact with Germans at the Archaeological Institute, whose senior research fellow, Dr Lehmann-Hartleben, was a distinguished expert on Rome, Pompey and Ostia. His hospitable house was open to all resident and visiting Germans. After Hitler came to power I met him and his family again in Rome where he had become a magnet for emigrant

**Translator's Note*: The *Kreuzzeitung* (formerly *Neue Preussische Kreuzzeitung*) was founded in 1848 by Ludwig Garlach as an organ of the Prussian conservatives. As a newspaper representing the interests of the *Junker* landed estates east of the Elbe, it supported the old monarchy and was often in opposition to Bismarck because of his constitutionalism. Hajo Holborn characterized it as 'the sonorous and uninhibited voice of diehard Prussian conservatism'.

academics. In 1924 he had played a magnificent role at the German Institute as a result of his energy and efficiency, whereas in 1934 he was able to use the Institute's library and rooms only thanks to the exceptional generosity of its Director, Ludwig Curtius.

In April 1925 I travelled to Sicily, where I had the pleasure of a reunion with the Italian doctor, G. Naccari, who had saved my life ten years earlier at the military hospital of Tai di Cadore. I then moved to Florence and rented a room from a stonemason in Settignano. From my window I could see the magnificent dome of the cathedral and its slim bell-tower below the surrounding hills, with their olive and cypress trees. Besides my work on the habilitation thesis, I enjoyed the beauty of life day in and day out, from early morning until late, in this Tuscan environment where everything was lucid, firm and transparent. I ate my lunches with the English boarders of Prior Don Rossi at the Catholic rectory. This admirable and witty man was later banished from his pretty house. His enemies had begrudged him the earnings from his foreign guests, and denounced him to the Archbishop. When I wanted to visit him again in 1930 in the course of my holiday travels, I found him an old and broken man who had become half-crazed in his anger and sorrow. He spent the sad remainder of his completely ruined life with his haggish and loyal housekeeper in a kind of henhouse.

I took many walks over the Tuscan hills in conversation with R. Oboussier, a young composer and musician whose mother kept a boarding-house for young German ladies in Rovezzano. At his home I also met Wolfskehl, with whom we attended the performance at Settignano's amateur theatre on a glorious summer evening. The main play, '*La gran' via*', was acted with such animation, intelligence and wit the likes of which I have never seen since. The local barrister conducted the performance from the piano; the actors were boys and girls working in local businesses. Don Rossi's kitchen maid played a baroness in the evening dress of an English boarder as though she had never been anyone else. Ten years later the hall was transformed into a fascist meeting-place, and my innkeeper and his wife whispered to me that the happy days ended when the fascists took over the government of even their district.

## *Return to Marburg and My Habilitation*

On my return to Marburg I met up again with my friend Marseille. He had procured me a lodging at the foot of the Rotenberg in the home of a family with whom I spent the following years most pleasantly. In Frau de Boor I gained an intelligent and cordial friend who also extended her affection to my wife. She was a keen member of the Anthroposophical Christian Community – not one of the pale and ethereal variety, but instead earthy, capable and unprejudiced. Above all, she was a human being. After 1933 she saw us through the bleak days with trust, understanding and readiness to help, and I still think of her today, particularly when 'Marburg' is mentioned.

Later on I shared a small house with Marseille in Ockershausen for two semesters. We were both regular guests at the Gadamers', whose hospitable house was for me a kind of repeat experience of B.'s Freiburg flat. Frida Gadamer had a circle of friends around her which congregated there on an almost daily basis. Her liveliness, warmth and generosity were a magnet for the most diverse characters. We were always welcome and frequently stayed for a meal. When Heidegger once had the idea of lecturing from seven to eight o'clock in the morning, we organised breakfast together in her flat, which consisted of only two rooms. We did the shopping for it on the way there, and endless discussions extended the session into the afternoon. In the course of many an evening, long novels by Balzac, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Gogol and Goncharov were read aloud – best of all by Gerhard Krüger, whose dry but none the less lively style was particularly well suited to the task. Heidegger joined us only rarely. He looked on our time-wasting with mistrust and was no longer inclined, as he had been in Freiburg, to have contact with us outside lectures. If we wanted to visit him at his flat, his wife would hardly ever let us go through to him. She would either turn us away or arrange for us to come another time.

Marburg also lacked the free atmosphere of the Freiburg years: everything was mustier and more entangled, and predominantly influenced by the theologians, among whom Bultmann was closest to our teacher, whereas R. Otto called dialectical theology and existentialist philosophy 'inflationary phenomena', and bore his

own old-fashionedness with proud dignity. Natorp had died; Nikolai Hartmann was offered a chair in Cologne, and thus escaped the malicious attacks by Heidegger students like ourselves and the gradual emptying of his lecture hall. Heidegger attracted a growing audience, whereas the other professors lost their students.

In 1928 the time had finally come for Heidegger to read and accept my habilitation thesis. My war service, and perhaps also my Protestant faith, prevented any serious resistance to the habilitation of this Jew, and in any case Heidegger's position was too strong for that to happen. In June I gave my probationary lecture to the Faculty on 'Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy'; this was followed by my public inaugural lecture on 'Jacob Burckhardt's Position on Hegel's Philosophy of History', which my parents attended too. After that my father was reconciled with my unprofitable period of study, and reassured about my future.

Heidegger, whose work had been published in the meantime, received the offer of Husserl's chair, and thus the invitation to return to Freiburg, during the course of this semester. The other two professors of philosophy - Mahnke and Jaensch - were still sick on account of Heidegger's teaching success, and needed to recuperate first. Heidegger's successor, Erich Frank, had yet to arrive. Thus it happened that I began lecturing under particularly auspicious circumstances, and had an audience of 150 at my first lecture. It would never have occurred to a single one of them at that time to see me as a 'foreign' intruder of whom the university had to 'purge' itself.

A year later I became engaged to a German girl whose father was the director of the Arndt Gymnasium in Berlin. The question of my Jewish descent was never touched upon on either side. As a Christian and a Protestant my father-in-law was content that I had been baptized a Protestant, and on his request we were married in a church in (Berlin-)Dahlem.

My Marburg teaching career developed both normally and satisfactorily. I never suffered from a shortage of interested and intelligent students, with some of whom I entered into closer relations, and there were talented and open-minded people among the younger lecturers with whom it was both rewarding and stimulating to associate. How I would like to hold a joint seminar with Deckert and Fahrnder once more! Within a few years I had attained

a permanent and distinguished position, and state funding from 1931 had made life easier. Life was modest but comfortable, and even permitted longer holiday trips to the South. I was disinclined to feel special solidarity for Jews as Jews; I associated with them in the same way as I did with my Aryan colleagues and friends – according to personal liking and choice.

I lectured on Nietzsche and Dilthey, Hegel and Marx, Kierkegaard and existentialist philosophy, philosophical anthropology, sociology and psychoanalysis. I was indifferent to the political situation, and for years I did not even read a newspaper. It was only much later that I became aware of the growing threat from Hitler's movement. I was as innocent about politics as were most of my colleagues.

## *The Seventieth Birthday and Death of My Father*

In 1931 I had the pleasure of seeing my father honoured on his seventieth birthday at the Munich *Künstlerhaus* (House of Artists) while he was still vigorous and cheerful. The Bavarian Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Munich attended his birthday party, as did many of the city's prominent figures. He was respected, popular and highly esteemed as an artist, a man of honour and a spokesman for German artists whose professional interests he had successfully and altruistically defended for more than a decade as their first Chairman. The speech with which he acknowledged the congratulations was simple and cordial, lively and concise.

Those who knew him were aware that nothing was more alien to him than the 'Jewish intelligentsia' or, worse still, the 'subversive element'. He was a German lock, stock and barrel, and even a Bavarian, although he was born in Moravia and had spent his youth in Vienna. As a destitute youth he went to Munich of his own free will to make it his home, because he saw the city as unspoilt and suited to his temperament. He became a naturalized and secular citizen.

In October 1932, one and a half years after his seventieth birthday party, he died. If he had died only a year later he would no longer have been buried in the 'Cemetery for Distinguished

Munich Artists'. When my mother sold some of his paintings she inherited, there was even a Nazi district leader [*Gauleiter*] among the interested parties. He demanded a written statement, certifying that my father was not of the Jewish faith, from the art dealer who acted as intermediary.

## *Three Portents of the Revolution*

Before the revolution three peculiar things happened within my closest circle, which now seem like a prelude to what was to come. I mention them because of their symptomatic significance. The Minister of Culture, Dr Becker, a well-known Orientalist, had come to Marburg in 1930 to present the new university constitution to the assembled professors and students. He was an intelligent and energetic man who did not mince his words. The reactionary members of the student fraternity did not like him, and loathed the government he represented. A group of them rallied on the road leading to the entrance to the university, booed the Minister on his arrival, then cleared off in a most cowardly manner. The rector was embarrassed by the incident, and apologized for it with the argument that the 'better part' of the students did not support this 'minority'.

In my next lecture I declared that this had been a very poor argument because the better part had, after all, to prove that it was better by influencing the worst elements and seeking to prevent such mischief instead of standing aside. Moreover, I used the incident to make a few fundamental remarks on the relationship between science and politics which were directed equally against the politicization and against the sterilization of science. The *Marburger Zeitung* reported my statement in a distorted and improper fashion, which led to my receiving an enquiry from the rector. Fortunately, a witness who was above suspicion, a nationalistically minded lecturer, had attended my lecture and was able to confirm my statement to him.

I was the only one of the Marburg University lecturers who lectured on Marx in the context of the history of German philosophy after Hegel. I had also published a treatise that critically compared

Max Weber and Karl Marx. In this tract Marxism was of interest to me not as an economic and socialist theory but as a radical critique of the bourgeois-Christian world as such. For this purpose I wanted to introduce the students to Marx's early philosophical writings. I announced this topic as an introductory lecture for 'students of all faculties', to attract a few students of law and political economy. The lecture programme appeared without my announcement being recorded under the category of *general* lectures. When I queried this with Professor N., who was in charge of the lecture programme, I received the reply that Marx was not of general interest – that he would not be of interest to, for example, medical and natural science students.

In a second letter I explained why I believed that Marx – in addition to his importance for Russia – should be of general interest to the students, and that it would do them no harm to be acquainted with some of his writings before talking about 'Marxism'. With reference to the printed lecture programme, I further added that it seemed to me that my lecture on the founder of socialism was, at the very least, more 'general' than those on 'The Life of Mohammed', 'The Development of the Christian Building of Worship', 'The Gothic Sculpture in France' or 'Baroque Music' – all topics which were listed under the category of general lectures for students of all faculties. To this came the following reply: 'You cannot use general lectures like the one on the life of Mohammed by way of comparison. Here we are talking about the leading men of world history on whom we have formed a conclusive judgement and who are therefore [*sic!*] of interest to a wider circle and in no way merely to the experts or a specific group.' This peculiar argument was not limited to the Orientalist, N., but served as an example of the academic mode of thinking: a historic force was required to have become 'historical' already – that is to say, it was no longer supposed to be of concern to anyone, in order to be of general interest! Given this frame of mind, who can still be amazed that our German intelligentsia capitulated in the face of real historical forces and, indeed, obtained their general knowledge about Marx only through Hitler? But perhaps now, in 1940, the inner conformity of the Russian and German revolutions has dawned on at least some of them.

The art historian D., one of our most talented young lecturers, was involved in an embarrassing affair in which he stood accused of embezzlement. Being generous, relaxed and uneconomical, he had procured a piece of jewellery for his fiancée which he had neither paid for nor returned, despite repeated reminders. The dealer approached the university directly, and protracted proceedings followed. Instead of helping D., the university forced him into a corner in endless interrogations until he was finally exposed – the only reason being that the accusing businessman was a well-known Nazi who had threatened to report the matter to the Party if the University did not remove him from his teaching post. Additional reasons for this outcome were D.'s very free and democratic views and his success as a teacher, which his enemies begrudged him. At the same time they used his case to fight his teacher Hamann, whose superior manner was disagreeable to them. D. was 'given sabbatical leave' for appearances' sake, but he was in fact dismissed for good and thus deprived of his intellectual and material basis of existence. In him, the university lost one of its best lecturers. Few have known the monuments of German art as intimately as he did, and understood how to make them come alive in an academic presentation. He lived entirely for his profession, and gave himself fully to lectures and tutorials. He never showed concern for himself, and was always, in a kindly manner, prepared to secure something for causes and people – in great contrast to my other friend, F., whose thrifty art of living consisted of not expending his energy. D.'s exposure was a victory for morally outraged mediocrity and academic cowardice. A year later D. sent me a letter of gratitude (for taking part in the proceedings), and I quote a passage relating to the revolution here:

> My interest was too absorbed and tormented by the events leading to the 'awakening of the nation'. I do not need to tell you anything about the way I think. My being reduced to a private person has perhaps given me the advantage that I did not become acquainted with the benevolent protective custody of the state, although I risked it, especially during the chief period of Jew-baiting. If the mania about blood and race were only stupid, one could perhaps observe it with interest as a symptom of the new

spirit. As it is, however, it goes against the grain to say something to you – you who are personally suffering from these unheard-of dirty tricks and insults – that does not match the rage and contempt which surround me daily. Nor can I quietly, and without a sense of shame, tolerate the cynicism with which everyone lies and deceives, slanders and breaks the law, because it offends me as a German that it is all happening in the name of the Germanness.

I am neither composed enough nor actually suited to sitting back and just watching the drama unfold. Quite apart from that, it is precisely those people whom I like best and consider the most worthy who suffer most from the 'moral renewal'. It is more the historian in me who might be satisfied by being shown, in a plainly astonishing way, just what he has so exactly described as the 'reaction'. In fact, as a historian I am also aware of the 'necessity' of such events, because it is precisely the reaction which has to bring about something new against its own will. But to know this is no consolation, no more than the banal phrase that 'it can't go on like this for ever under the changing moon'. We all know that everything for ever takes its course, and that history carries on building its monstrous form, but what I find totally incomprehensible is the petty-bourgeois optimism that 'these are just excesses' and that 'everything will sort itself out', which even people like H. and, in an entirely different way, J. too are full of. I cannot understand in general how a historically thinking person can talk about everything sorting itself out again, as if there was a comfortable natural equilibrium to which the world is obliged constantly to return. After all, it is only people, those singular individuals, who – in full knowledge and with material benefit – again and again unscrupulously make themselves comfortable on the heap of others' corpses.

As far as possible I try to keep my observations free from the necessary delusions accompanying the feeling of involvement. There is, after all, a 'rejection of the world' that is devoid of asceticism and looks on with great interest. Much of what is abominable, which is certainly only fatuous in Marburg, is worth observing in a city like Hamburg; for instance, the forms the triumph of the petty-bourgeois take and in which the proletariat

deceives itself. But the oddest experiences are those which make one conscious of one's own relation to the era. I believe this is where the difference between a more contemplative nature like yours and a more activist and propagandist one like mine is reduced, because action in a reactionary period becomes impossible, not only externally, for a non-reactionary person. Only a really independent and brilliantly detached person could, perhaps, accomplish something that goes against the era. If one is not such a person, like me, one is forced into a role for which one is unsuited – namely, preserving the tradition.

## *Before the Nazi Takeover*

I now return to the period immediately before the Nazi takeover to recapture a few more characteristic details. At the beginning of 1932 Karl Jaspers's *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Man in the Modern Age) was published as the thousandth Goeschen volume. This work was massively sold, read and discussed in depth; a year later it was already a historical document. Jaspers's analysis of the period appeared just at the right time – shortly before the reflection on various 'possibilities' was deprived of its intellectual grounding by a very manifest reality. Jaspers's intelligent and stimulating analysis of the crisis has made a virtue of necessity, the virtue of 'authentic foundering'. To the question as to what was real he answered: 'the consciousness of danger and loss'. The truth shone out in irretrievable loss, substance in helplessness, reality in masquerade, and those who wanted to get back to the source would have to traverse this helplessness in order to come to a decision about themselves. Philosophy, therefore, could and should only lead to that point where human beings as individuals had to help themselves if they were to remain human at all, rather than simply existential machines. With a view to a 'possible' individual decision, Jaspers rejected all available alternatives. For example, he believed neither in the national '*Volk*' nor in the democratic 'mass', neither in the nobility of status nor in that of race, but instead in the nobility of 'self-being' – that is, in the human being 'as such' – 'in the possibility of human progress'! In this rejection of all the either-or or as-well-as

arguments on offer, Jaspers philosophized with distinguished superiority in the form of a neither-nor. All existing realities were 'transcended' by his '*Existenz*' to arrive at a 'philosophical life' that is nowhere and everywhere. His thinking 'encompasses' everything and grasps nothing.

In fact, soon thereafter Hitler had resolved the situation of the times with less ingenuity, and 'individuals' withdrew into their own four walls. But even then Jaspers thought that one could and should stay true to oneself, like a crystal ball, in all situations.

On his propaganda trips throughout Germany, Hitler had also come to Marburg. Jews were, as usual, denied access to the marquee in which he made his speech. Most of the older lecturers had stayed at home. I asked F. to convey his impressions to me. He thought, in his Austrian way, that while Hitler was definitely not the future '*Führer*' (he used this word in the way Stefan George had used it), he was perhaps a 'magical idot' who would get the masses moving until the real ruler emerged. Other colleagues were partly unsure, partly disappointed, and I did not know anyone who was convinced. My landlord, a petty-bourgeois who was wounded in the war, preferred Ludendorff, and many did not voice their real opinion because it was still unclear whether Hitler would win his game. One thing, however, was clear: the German intelligentsia was stupid enough to misjudge the seriousness of the situation.

In Catholic Bavaria the aversion to Hitler's Party was so strong that I considered transferring my habilitation to Munich if the worst came to the worst. I consulted a friend of mine, a member of its Faculty of Philosophy. I was told with great confidence that I should just come if the need arose. After all, it was absolutely impossible that Bavaria would join in the madness of the 'Prussians'. Bavaria's secession from the *Reich* in a union with Austria was an idea that had never disappeared from the Southern German minds and stubborn heads after the end of the war; admittedly, this did not prevent Bavaria from getting a National Socialist governor overnight and being tied to the *Reich* more closely than ever.

During the winter vacation of 1932–3 – it was the last one in which one did not have to be an Aryan to be admitted to a German hotel – we went skiing in the Arlberg region with the physicist T. He was Czech by birth; his first wife had been Jewish; his second,

a Russian *emigrée*, was fresh and uninhibited, sporty and cultivated. Even before their official marriage they had already lived together in the Institute of Physics without ever taking any notice of their colleagues' sour faces. Their lifestyle was very modern and, for Marburg conditions, almost provocative. They also had their own car, which gave them the desired freedom of movement. T.'s wife had already obtained her pilot's licence as a girl without losing her feminine charm through her sporting ambitions. They were both 'great' people, as lazy and hedonistic as they were active and enterprising, and we were able to recover with them in the most pleasant fashion from the rather stuffy atmosphere of our philosophical circle.

While we spent two beautiful weeks with them at the same farmhouse in Lech, Germany was in the throes of Hitler's final election campaign. Since Lech is in the Austrian Alps, coaches were made available to take German holidaymakers to the border for the poll. We thought as little of sacrificing even an hour to politics as the T.s did. We went on a ski-tour and poked fun at the few people who travelled to the polling station.

A few weeks later I learnt that T. was enthusiastically active in the service of the Party. After that he avoided contact with us, and only his wife came to visit us once more; she was somewhat affected by the drastic change and its consequences for me. From this point onwards T. himself propagated the Aryan standpoint in lectures and essays, like his teacher Lenard. Jewish physics and mathematics were to be abolished, because their modes of thought were incompatible with the German species. As a Czech married to a Russian, T. had particular cause to emphasize his Germanness. I never spoke to him again before I left Marburg. The speed with which he found the *Anschluss* was due partly to the fact that he had for some years aspired to a full professorship, which he now obtained in Dresden, but partly also to his technical world-view, for which he found intellectual stimulation in Ernst Jünger. What attracted him to National Socialism was neither its 'national' nor its 'social' apects, but the aspect that won him over for the Russian Revolution: the radical rationalization of life through the political application of all technical possibilities, in which he, as a physicist, was interested.

## *The German 'Uprising' of 1933 and My Final Lecture in Marburg*

The German uprising manifested itself in Marburg, as everywhere else, at first by the dismissal and hounding of the Jews. SA men forced a Jewish researcher at a medical institute to march through the town before them, carrying a placard on which was written: 'I have defiled a German girl'. Passers-by reacted to this spectacle by slinking away to the other side of the street, partly curious and partly ashamed. I did not see this with my own eyes, but I have been shown a photograph of it. This was the German '*Zivilcourage*', for which the Germans have no word because they lack the quality it describes.

My landlord, who respected me as a disabled ex-serviceman, behaved with decency and restraint. Some of the older professors visited me to demonstrate their sympathy for me. One honest and upright theologian was so naive that he was seriously unclear whether it was I or my wife who was the 'alien' partner. Until 1933 he had been the editor of a deeply red Christian Marxist journal, and feared dismissal on those grounds. In 1935, however, he found the *Anschluss* by emphasizing National *Socialism* to himself and *National* Socialism to the outside world. The 'proletariat' became the '*Volk*', and his book *Evangelische Ethik des Politischen* (The Evangelical Ethics of Politics), which appeared in 1936, invokes Carl Schmitt's theory of the totalitarian state, of which he had previously been a merciless opponent.

My younger colleagues were more or less embarrassed, because they had nothing positive to offer as an alternative to their rejection of National Socialism. A resolute and initially united resistance came only from the Protestant theologians who were supposed to enforce the Aryan clause. After a brief period, however, this unity, which was imposed from the outside, collapsed. In the lecturers' room I once overheard the following conversation between two professors of theology: A: 'We cannot defend the Aryan clause from a Christian standpoint.' B: 'Why not? The Negroes in New York do not enjoy equal rights with the Americans either.' One section joined the German Christian Church, another played with compromises; only Bultmann and von Soden remained steadfast

and maintained the principles of the Confessing Church.* Among the German professors of theology only one, so far as I know, refused the oath of service to Hitler, and that was Karl Barth – and he was Swiss.

A protest by professors of the most diverse faculties against the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues was never made public. Only the Berlin rector, Kohlrausch, the psychologist Koehler, and the philosopher and educational theorist Spranger dared to voice public disapproval. This was in response mainly to an appeal made by the general union of German students, *Against the Non-German Spirit*, which contained the following theses, amongst others:

> (4) Our most dangerous adversary is the Jew and those who are in bondage to him. (5) The Jew can only think in a Jewish way. If he writes in German, he lies. . . . (6) We want to eradicate the lie, we want to denounce betrayal; we don't want places of thoughtlessness for the student, but of discipline and political education. (7) We want to respect the Jew as a foreigner and we want to take the *Volk* tradition seriously. We therefore demand of the censors that Jewish works be published in Hebrew. If they appear in German they are to be classified as translations. . . . German writing is available only to Germans. The non-German spirit will be obliterated from public libraries . . . (10) We demand of German students the will and capacity to overcome Jewish intellectualism and the connected liberal symptoms of decline in German intellectual life. (11) We demand the selection of students and professors in accordance with the safeguarding of thought in the German spirit.

The only inconsistent aspect of this was that they none the less pretended 'to respect' the Jew as a foreigner. This appeal was also posted at Marburg University, where only four Jewish lecturers taught besides myself. None of the Aryan colleagues had the idea

**Translator's Note:* The Confessing Church was a movement among German Evangelicals opposed to the rise of Nazism in the 1930s, and to the pro-Nazi 'German Christian Church'. Developing from the Pastor's Emergency League of 1933, it was led by Martin Niemöller and was openly active until the beginning of the Second World War, but lost influence as it was forced underground by the Nazis during the war. It continued as a movement within the Evangelical Church after 1945.

and courage to demand that it be removed. After all, this appeal was of no personal concern to them. When I asked K. to tell the chairman of the lecturers' association that he should arrange for the removal of the appeal, I received the answer that it would be best to leave it there, because its removal might further exacerbate student unrest in the current situation. The general mood was to wait and see how things would develop, and to avoid any personal exposure. Moreover, all of them were preoccupied with their own worries because few were Party members, which made them feel insecure. Co-ordination, therefore, came about of its own accord, and it seemed almost as though even Jewish professors would have to join in the singing of the Horst Wessel anthem at university ceremonies!

A young pale-looking lad, a real psychopath who had also attended my lectures, suddenly revealed himself as the '*Führer*' of the whole student body. He also presided with a swastika armband at our first lecturers' meeting after Hitler took office. The new chairman of the lecturers' association, whose Party registration number was more recent, sat modestly beside him. The items on the agenda were settled with military haste, and at the end we were called upon to join the newly founded National Socialist teachers' association. A form was passed round, and one after the other signed to enrol as a member until a shy theologian put up his hand and dared to raise the question whether it was not possible first to take a look at the statutes of this teachers' association, so that one knew what one was signing. Our 'chairman' was a little embarrassed, and regretted to say that he had not yet received the statutes from Berlin, and therefore had not seen them himself. After that, some hesitated to continue signing.

And these were the very same people who, only a month before, had insisted on hours of discussion about every trifle before a resolution could be passed. Incidentally, a few weeks later came the order from the Minister that university teachers were *not* permitted to join the teachers' association, and those who had already joined would have to cancel their membership!

No less lamentable was the general currying favour with the political 'world-view'. The new lecture programme was full of titles which had the 'state' added to them: 'Physics and the State',

'Art and the State', 'Philosophy and Politics', 'Plato and National Socialism', and so on. As a consequence, in the following semester the Minister sent a letter which prohibited political topics in so far as they were not within the competence of the lecturers' subject. Two years later developments had advanced so far that, on the basis of the miserable examination results, the Minister declared that he would no longer tolerate any professors dabbling in politics. The results of the 'populist' scholarship indeed led to a depoliticization for political reasons, and the totalitarian state, paradoxically, again became the advocate of neutrality in intellectual matters!

As early as 1933 we perceived it as a real liberation when Romano Guardini came to lecture in Marburg, and spoke about Pascal without making a single reference to the topics of the day. But this did not pass without censure. The National Socialist psychologist Jaensch, who had in the meantime invented the 'counter-type' to the German, was very angry about this lecture, and declared that it was a disgrace that the university was at this very moment listening to a lecture about a Frenchman given by a 'foreign' intellectual. (Guardini was Italian by birth.)

In the initial confusion of hurried orders and counter-orders, the newly appointed chairman of the lecturers' association forbade me to continue my course of lectures. I did not argue about it, but travelled to Berlin and secured an interview through the mediation of a fellow ex-serviceman who was an official at the Ministry. The gentleman in charge advised me not to worry about it, and to continue lecturing. On the recommencement of my lectures I expected a scandal which, however, failed to materialize. Soon after that the chairman of the lecturers' association congratulated me on 'being offered a chair' in America – a rumour that was persistently repeated, and the spreading of which was most indicative of the situation. It was supposed to remove the stumbling-block in a satisfactory manner, and at the same time to relieve the bad conscience of those who enjoyed security and success: the Jew had been taken care of elsewhere, and they were rid of him there.

One of the first professors to be dismissed, a friend of mine, was the scholar of Romance languages and literature Leo Spitzer. Benedetto Croce had dedicated his work on Goethe to him in memory of this. He was a Viennese Jew who had devoted himself

to his teaching career with enthusiasm, and was a celebrated scholar far beyond Germany. In April 1933 he wrote to me:

> I share your view that Germany is still the most wonderful country for one who learns by teaching – but I am also a father, and can only think with a bleeding heart of the innocent who can be prevented from advancing in their education. What is currently happening is a Bolshevik primitivization on a petty-bourgeois and romantic basis, the German form of a middle-class Bolshevism. We have to lay the greatest blame at the door of the bourgeois complacency of all those who are successfully showing precisely in these days that there are no martyrs among them. Not a single voice is raised – among the 'others'. I naturally ask myself whether I could and should not do something martyr-like – but it is now up to the 'others'. I recently heard the Matthew Passion, which is highly relevant in its description of the loneliness of the persecuted. By that I do not mean to say that there are no good souls and sympathetic natures here, as anywhere else. But there exists a fundamental lack of understanding and solidarity between those who are secure and those who are not, those who have only vague knowledge and those who have it in their blood.

There were other Jewish professors, too, who tried to distance themselves. At the decisive moment they did not know where they belonged, because their Germanness was as weak as their Jewishness. The reproach of 'mimicry' which anti-Semites as well as Zionists levelled against the Germanized Jew does indeed apply to them – but only to them. Both extremes thus escaped the problem which was both for me and also in itself the decisive one: that one can be a German *and* a Jew, although the conduct of Germans forbade one to take one's stand beside them at this moment, even from a distance.

Spitzer, too, had for quite some time been no longer a Jew by conviction, but he knew where he had to stand, and described his situation very rightly as an 'atavistic feeling of solidarity in the hour of need'. He also correctly foresaw the actual situation of German Jews from the beginning when, in 1933, he told those of us who still had our teaching posts that we were only the 'later ones'

who would follow those first ones to be dismissed, while many (including myself) had deceived themselves for years and believed that anti-Jewish measures would be moderated. A well-meaning colleague told me in Rome as late as 1935: 'Just wait another year, and you will be asked to return.' Colleague T. wrote to me along similar lines: 'I am pleased that you hold your head up high and retain your position. The fact that you hold on to the German university is right, and one day people will see this again.'

When Spitzer was offered a chair in Istanbul he tried to find me a teaching post there, but I had personal misgivings about leaving Marburg unnecessarily. Even before Hitler came to power I was awarded a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for Italy, on the recommendation of the German Committee, which I was supposed to take up in 1933. The uncertainty of the whole situation after the revolution now compelled me to keep it pending until spring 1934. Heidegger, too, advised me to postpone it, so as not to make it appear that I was voluntarily resigning my position in Germany.

Social contact in Marburg had already gradually fallen off during this interim period. It was encumbered with the impossibility of avoiding delicate and inauthentic situations, since it was bearable neither to live on the periphery of the university by sheer tolerance nor to see oneself 'treated' with special care like a patient, and to have to take into consideration that there was a chance of meeting one of the 'others' while visiting one's Aryan friends, and thus to embarrass one's friends. But the greatest majority of my students remained loyal to me, and there were a good many conversations which proved that I was only seemingly alone. Even at that time there was a move towards internal emigration within Germany, and state despotism walled people into their private lives, in which they were then all the more open.

We spent the last summer vacation on the narrow tongue of land of Nidden (Lithuania) because as a Jew one risked not being admitted in German seaside resorts. A Jewish doctor from Königsberg (later Kalinigrad) talked to us during a trip across the mudflats in the horse-drawn cart. He was trying to regain his equilibrium there. He was very much taken aback by the revolution, because his

adult sons had always felt themselves to be German and would have joined the Nazis had it not been for their racial handicap. Thousands of human relationships and existences were destroyed or shattered in this fashion, and the newspapers published a long list of suicides every day.

The tolerable continuation of my teaching career could not gloss over the schism between my brilliant beginning with a lecture series on Nietzsche and its bleak end, again with Nietzsche. I was no longer a young lecturer who could be counted among the core of the rising academic generation, but a non-Aryan who was tolerated only because of his war service; one who lectured to SA students in an atmosphere of insurmountable distance. In this stifling atmosphere I had to assert myself for another two semesters and risk offending the co-ordinated by the fact that I was still there.

I had chosen Nietzsche as a theme again on purpose, because he seemed to me to be the touchstone of a present that mostly interpreted itself through him. I wanted to make it clear to the students that Nietzsche was a precursor of the German present, and at the same time its sharpest negation – 'National Socialist' and 'Cultural Bolshevik' – either, depending on how he was used. In contrast to this timely or untimely use, I tried to establish the idea of eternity as the central focus of his philosophy.

Having the presentiment that this lecture would be my last one in Germany, I risked a direct comment in the final hour on the racial question and my personal position on it. I concluded the lecture with the hope that they had hopefully learnt from me that one did not necessarily have to be Aryan to lecture with propriety, and that it did not depend on *what* one was but on *who* one was. With this I not only received applause but also made a more serious impression, about which I was concerned not only at a personal level but also as an exponent of the excluded ones [*Ausgeschalteten*]. Perhaps my decision to do this was indeed due only to my wish to save the honour of my father, who was spared the insult of not being considered a German any longer by his timely death. After the lecture the SS student von K. took his leave of me, and Boschwitz presented me with a beautiful Van Gogh drawing. It gave me a sense of satisfaction that this Jewish and that German student had

found each other, even at a personal level, by their joint attendance at my two-hour lecture, and had harmoniously exchanged their views in the corridor during the half-time break. In looks they made an odd couple: Boschwitz with a yellowish skin, dark eyes and black hair; von K. rosy, light-eyed and blond.

# Illustrations

1 Parental flat in Munich, Rosenstr. 6[IV]

2 Colonel (*Oberst*) Epp

3 Before the march to the front (December 1914)

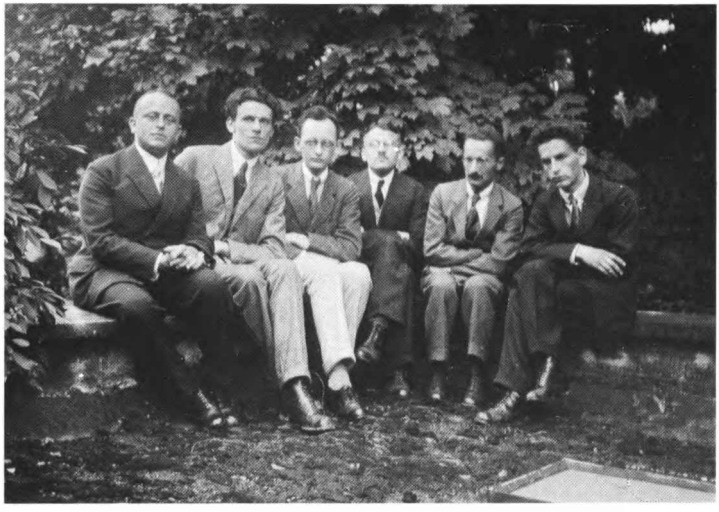
4 En route from France to Italy (May 1915)

5 L. Ludovici, self-portrait: 'Love and Will' (1913)

6 With H. Besseler (1923)

7 Edmund Husserl

8 Max Weber

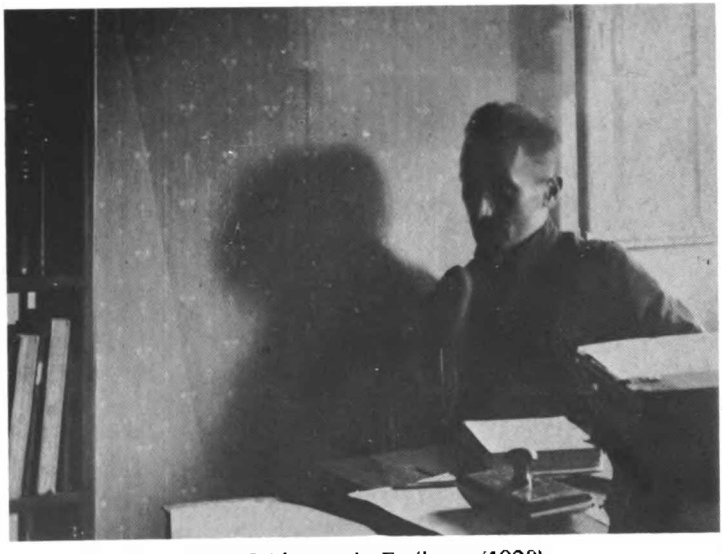


9 Kaufmann, Besseler, Becker, Thust, Heidegger and myself in Freiburg (1922)

10 Husserl's Freiburg Seminar (1920)

11 Husserl and Heidegger (1921)

12 Todtnauberg ski-hut (1923)



13 Heidegger in Freiburg (1920)

14 (1923)

15 (1933)

16 The Marburg University Faculty of Philosophy
first row, second from the left, Martin Heidegger (1927?)

17 Marburg, Sybelstrasse 16

18 Marburg Castle Café (*Schlosscafé*) (February 1928)

19 W. Marseille (1930)

20 Myself, H.-G. Gadamer, F. Gadamer, Bröcker, Jutta and Irmgard

21 In Florence (1925)

22 With my mother in Rome (1936)

23 With Ada in Sendai (1937)

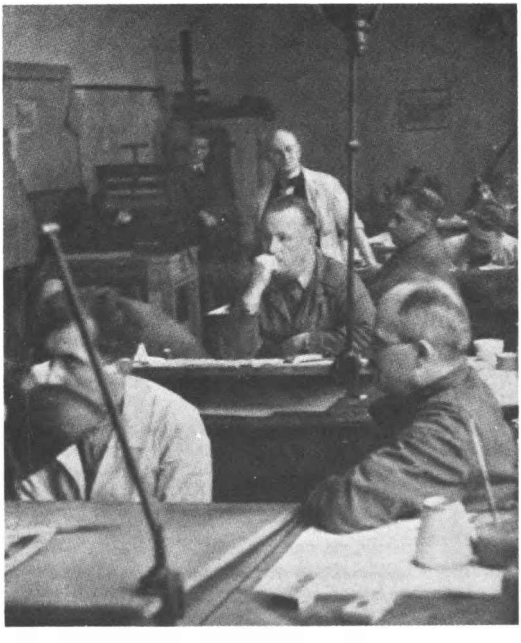
24

25

Picture report of 1937 in the *Berliner Illustrierte*

26

27



'The face of the German listening to the *Führer's* speech'

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*die Deutschland vor und nach Hitler gut kennen!*

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## *TO EVERYONE*

### *who knows Germany well before and after Hitler*

★

For the purpose of a purely scientific collection of materials, which is to be used for an investigation into the *social and emotional effects of National Socialism on German society and the German people*, we offer one thousand dollars as a prize for the *best unpublished life histories (autobiographies)* on the following topic:

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The prize competition is carried out under the personal directorship of the following members of the teaching staff of Harvard University, who will also form the Prize Jury Collegiate. They will be solely responsible for the evaluation of the submitted manuscripts and the allocation of prizes:

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The following prizes are awarded:

FIRST PRIZE $500 SECOND PRIZE $250 THIRD PRIZE $100
FOURTH PRIZE $50 FIFTH PRIZE $20

Manuscripts may be submitted *under a pseudonym* or *anonymously*, but they must be *truthful*.

The manuscripts may be written in *German or English*. The choice of language has no impact on the judgement. The essays may be *as long as desired*, but should amount to a minimum of 20,000 words. (ink marked by Löwith (?) = 80 typed pages)

The prize competition closes on 1st April 1940. (Manuscripts must bear a post-mark no later than that date.)

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Manuscripts will be accepted only if the following particulars are given clearly on the first page: AGE (approx.) and SEX of the author; the REGION of Germany in which the author lived, and the number of inhabitants of his place of residence; the RELIGION of the author, as well as other significant details about the SOCIAL POSITION of the author in Germany (e.g. married or single, children, approximate income, education, etc.). (Your social position as such has no bearing on your chances of winning.)

Your life history should be kept as *simple, direct, complete* and *graphic* as possible. Please DESCRIBE only real events, the WORDS and ACTIONS OF PEOPLE, in as far as you remember them. The Prize Jury have no interest in philosophical reflections on the past, but primarily in a report of personal experiences. Citations from *letters, diaries, notebooks,* and *other personal documents* will give your description the desired *authenticity* and *completeness*. This is not supposed to be a literary prize competition. You should therefore venture to enter even if you have never written before, if you only have a good memory, the gift of sharp observation and human knowledge. Even if you do not obtain a prize, your essay is likely to be a highly valuable source for the study of the new Germany and National Socialism.

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*Further copies of this announcement* are readily available to *interested parties*.

Text of the competition through which my report came about.

30 Hans-Georg Gadamer (1939)

# *1934–36*

## *My Departure from Marburg*

The theologian Bultmann invited us and my closest colleagues (Gadamer, Krüger and Frank) to a farewell party the evening before my departure. It was revealing that only a representative of the Protestant faith played host to an expelled Jew who had described the decline of Christianity in his lectures to students of theology! We had already taken leave of the remainder of our acquaintances and friends – von Haendly and de Boor, von Birtner and Jacobsthal. Our departure from the house on the Kirchhainerweg passed off without a trace of sentimentality; the sense of detachment had become nearly automatic after one year of National Socialism. The next morning I travelled to Munich to see my mother, and from there onwards to Rome. Two of my favourite students, B. and M., kindly helped my wife to pack our belongings, which were stored in Marburg for the time being.

During the night a German official fetched me from the carriage at the border station Kufstein. I had to take my luggage to the station building where all my pockets were turned inside out and I had to undergo a body search. The few hundred lire I had on me beyond the permitted sum remained undiscovered. They were safe at the bottom of a cigarette packet, which I had left in the carriage compartment. Since then I have gained much additional knowledge about German currency laws, and have only one regret: that I had not been able to cheat the state by even bigger sums.

In Rome I rented a beautiful room in the Via Gregoriana from a charming landlady, and thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation I began a free life. At first I elaborated my Nietzsche studies as well as my last seminar exercise on Carl Schmitt's *Begriff des Politischen* (The Concept of Politics). It was still possible to publish

a somewhat abridged version of the Nietzsche book in Germany, while my critique of Schmitt appeared under a pseudonym in an international journal.

## *Italians and Germans*

At that time Italian policy had not yet insisted on the axis. On the contrary: Mussolini joined Austria in its policy against annexation by Germany, and German *emigrés* were therefore well received – or at least, they did not face any special problems. The political affinity between fascism and National Socialism never reached the roots of actual everyday life and thinking. It is true that the uniformed petty bourgeoisie was dominant in both countries, and that it repeated with fervour what it was told, but it is hard to imagine that one could ever hear from Hitler's lips a statement so devoid of illusion as Mussolini's when he justified his dictatorship by saying that people were 'tired of freedom', and therefore happy that someone was ordering them about. In Germany it was the professors and journalists who discovered that 'true' freedom is coercion.

And what a difference in the character of the people! The German takes National Socialism absolutely seriously as a doctrine, whereas the Italian sees his fascism as a means to an end and, as an individual, is not going to let himself be impressed by anything. The German is pedantic and intolerant, because he sees everything as a matter of principle by divorcing it from the human being; the Italian is humane even in a black shirt, because he has a natural understanding for human weaknesses. He is fundamentally sceptical, and does not take matters of life more seriously than they actually are. To the categorical assertion of the German corresponds the Italian's casual 'Who knows?', and 'kindness' is an unlovable virtue that wins respect, but no friends. To the question 'How are you?', the German reply is 'Excellent!', while for the Italian it is 'Not bad'. For the average Italian the fascist election slogan '*Credere, obbedire, combattere*' (to believe, to obey, to fight) is a rhetorical maxim which he smilingly lets pass, while for a German, Hitler's utterance 'My will is your faith' is a profound and binding dictum which he

interprets, with the aid of his educated German philologist, as 'allegiance', 'loyalty' and 'self-sacrifice'. The Italian knows the world from experience, while the German designs a 'world-view' for his own use.

German virtues make easy enemies, while an Italian 'cunning' can win even the heart of the deceived. A porter in the port of Naples charged me three times the legal rate with the most honest expression. When I protested, he replied: 'My dear sir, you are wrong if you think that we are still the thieves of days gone by. Since Mussolini we are very disciplined' – thus, of course, he cheated me. The *Duce* likes to hear himself speak, while the *Führer* makes very long 'cultural speeches'. I consider a seaman's characterization of his *Duce* and our *Führer* after Hitler's unsuccessful visit to Venice (1934) unbeatable: 'This one', after all, always cuts a 'fine figure', while 'that one' always wears a 'mean and contorted expression'.

In Rome I became acquainted with many Italians, from Senator Gentile to our landlady Candeli. While they came from quite different social backgrounds, they were all imbued with an innate humanity which is more compatible with cynicism and scepticism than the fastidious correctness and arrogance which often make Germans intolerable to the Italians. Italians may be unreliable and even disloyal, but they are always themselves, whilst the Germans represent something – an office, a title, a world-view, or whatever.

When I arrived in Rome, the most widely read book was a novel by Moravia with the apt title *Gli Indifferenti* (The Time of Indifference). And just now I am reading the latest popular Roman joke in an American newspaper. It relates to a tram line, the so-called *Circolare*, which begins at the Porta Pia through which the fascists marched in, onwards via the Piazza del Popolo and the Palazzo della Giustizia to Piazza della Libertà, past the church whose façade displays the open mouth of a mask – '*Bocca della Verità*' – and finally ends at the old Forum. In the joke these stops illustrate the emergence of fascism: 'It starts at Porta Pia, goes towards the people, leaves justice behind, cuts off liberty, closes the mouth of the truth, and ends in ruins'. And when I met up with Antoni the day after Mussolini's proclamation of the *Imperio*, he said laconically that this did not signify much, since Abyssinia had, after all, already had an emperor before – 'only the Negus has changed'.

The other side of this personal freedom is an opportunism with a clean conscience, which is, however, very different from German co-ordination. A typical example of this was the conduct of the director of the Italian-German Cultural Institute. Gabetti quite uninhibitedly went along with all the fluctuations of Italian policy in its relations with Germany. In 1934 he still permitted the Jewish *émigré* Wolfskehl to make the commemorative speech for George, while in 1936 he avoided inviting the literary historian Kommerell merely because he knew that he was *persona non grata* for the German Party. From that time onwards he preferred to invite reliable National Socialist professors to give lectures – like Haushofer, Heidegger, Heyse, Naumann and Carl Schmitt. The principle of his directorship was very simple: in order to keep the Institute afloat and to spend the funds allocated by the state, one had to invite a few 'bigwigs' to lecture each semester. The automatic consequence was the receipt of return invitations which benefited the director. But deep down he knew quite well how things stood with the professors of the *Reich*, and privately he scorned German academics for having sold out, and said that there would soon be nobody left 'to circulate'.

Gentile's speech after the conquest of Abyssinia was interesting. He developed a philosophy of Italian imperialism which threw Machiavelli, Mazzini and Mussolini into the same fascist pot. Fascism, it was suddenly claimed, had from the beginning never had any other goal than gaining an empire with Abyssinia. And this was said by the same Senator Gentile who six months earlier, when I visited him in Forte dei Marmi, had made no bones about his decided disapproval of the Abyssinian war. At that time he heartily condemned the whole venture because it was madness to make an enemy of England. When the whole affair was successfully completed, however, he beamed and smiled when he spoke of 'we' ('we who have conquered Abyssinia'), although neither he nor his sons had the slightest involvement in the war. When Gabetti asked my opinion on leaving the lecture hall, and I told him that I could not take Gentile's speech seriously, as its historical-philosophical note served only as a retrospective justification for the practical success, with which the intelligentsia was now trying to catch up, he gave me the vexed and irritated reply: 'What's the point of your scientific doubts? Scepticism gets you nowhere'. Yet none the less,

the opportunism of these people was not unbearable, because they were not fooling themselves.

Only in Italy is it possible that someone like Croce publishes his *Critica* up to this very day, in which he articulates every month what others only dare to think. In the issue of 20 July 1939 there is an article about *La Fine dello Stato Etico* (The End of the Ethical State), which is directed at Gentile. It states that now, after fifteen years of the fascist theory of the state, the attentive observer could certainly say that the so-called 'ethical state' has freed us of its 'awkward presence' . . . 'it's gone off in a puff of smoke, maybe to make other more credulous people happy. . . . About fifteen years ago, I listened to an Italian professor who deserved to be called the ardent lover of the religion of state and government in a Danteesque fashion, who beat the table with his great fists, cried out like a man possessed, shouted that the state is duty and God . . . that in celebrating the state you celebrate real freedom' – one could believe that the state was ethical life itself. But those who knew Hegel smiled knowingly, since 'such a Dionysiac delirium of the state' was only the garbage of Hegel's worst theory, both exaggerated and blown up. Gradually one got bored with the 'ethical state' in view of the drama unfolding in the world today, which daily demonstrates how states do nothing but play at politics in the sense of 'the most raw, hard, unprejudiced politics', which knocks everything down and drags it along.

The man who wrote these lines is clearly insulated from the outside world but is, none the less, the intellectual authority of all educated Italians. Even the students of his enemy Gentile are taught more by Croce than by Gentile himself. Although they do not dare to meet Croce in public, and even avoid telephoning his home, they still read every new issue of *Critica*, while at the same time they write articles for Gentile's journal in which they do not refer to Croce. I was fortunate to meet Croce once at his home with a few of his friends. He accompanied us for a walk until midnight through the narrow lanes of Naples. Even if we of the younger generation were not always able to agree with his evaluation of the epochal changes, one thing is certain: in today's Europe he remains one of the very few free minds, and he has a level of knowledge and education that puts all younger people to shame.

## *National Socialist Professors in Rome*

The professors of the Third Reich who came to lecture in Rome were, besides Heidegger, the German philologist Hans Naumann, the philosopher Hans Heyse, State Councillor Carl Schmitt, the geopolitical specialist Karl Haushofer, and the sociologist Hans Freyer. Besides them we had the jurist Hans Frank, who was to impart to the Italians the necessity of the German race laws, but at that time without apparent success.

Heyse's technical lecture was dull and insignificant. Those who were familiar only with his book would hardly have suspected that the author of such pan-Germanic and anti-Christian claims was a mild, reserved and shy person. Since he was very influential both as rector of the *Reich* University of Königsberg and as director of the first 'camp for university lecturers', I took the opportunity to talk to him about my situation, which at that time was still unclear – legally I was still a university lecturer, although my lecturing contract had actually already been revoked. Heyse disapproved of this procedure, and promised that on his return he would get in touch with the appropriate authorities and let me know what he had accomplished. I have never heard from him again.

Naumann, already a fairly worn-out man, was more interesting. His topic was 'The Germanic World-View', which was supposed to mean 'heroic pessimism'. In 1933 he had dedicated one of his books, *Hitler and George*,* to the *Führer* and the poet of the Third Reich; he alone had no feeling for the tastelessness and ridiculousness of this combination. More recently he attempted an interpretation of National Socialism and the Germanic character by using Heidegger's categories in *Sein und Zeit*. The Italians were amused at this conceptual confusion, but Naumann was deeply convinced that

**Translator's Note*: There is no book by Naumann entitled *Hitler and George*. However, I can only surmise that Naumann's 1933 book *Wandlung und Erfüllung: Reden und Aufsätze zur germanisch-deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Change and Fulfilment: Lectures and Essays in Germanic-German Intellectual History), which I am unable to get hold of, bears this dedication to Hitler and George. In the final section of another book – also published in 1933 – which deals with George's poems, *Die deutsche Dichtung der Gegenwart: 1855–1933* (Modern German Poetry: 1855–1933), Naumann applauds George's prophetic vision of the new *Reich* and the *Führer* twelve years before the actual event (pp. 398, 400).

Heidegger's half-understood categories would enable him to grasp the depths of the Germanic myth, and over dinner he was extremely offended when his heroic pessimism was somewhat derided.

One of the subsequent visitors was Carl Schmitt, on whose 'decisionism' I had published a critical essay under a pseudonym behind which he suspected Georg Lukács. He had no idea that the author would be among his listeners, and that he was a friend of the Italian who had translated both the critique and Schmitt's political writings into Italian. Schmitt's personal impression did not match my expectations. The State Councillor was by no means a self-assured dictator but a petty-bourgeois with a bland, rosy face. On finishing his lecture he cast uncertain glances around him, as if he did not feel quite sure of his audience. The central point of his lecture was as consistent as it was despicable: the 'total state' originated in 'total war'. A total war, however, also required a 'total enemy', and the 'immorality' [*sic!*] of the last war had consisted in the fact that it was waged without a total enemy. Schmitt did not spell out whether he regarded 'Bolshevism' as the past 'total enemy', and England as the present one. When he talked to Catholics like my friend Erik Peterson, his idea of the state would normally be slanted towards authoritarian Catholic terms. He personally came from the new Catholic circle which had earlier formed around Scheler. The difference between them was that Scheler's inner doubt manifested itself in constant changes of position, whereas in Schmitt and Peterson it took the form of a decision, whether it be for the Church or the State. A year later Schmitt was overtaken by his fate: *Das Schwarze Korps* (The Black Corps) published an article which exposed his earlier relations with Jews. After that he was forced to return to his professorship and resign all his other offices.

Freyer's lecture dealt with 'The historical self-confidence of the twentieth century'. History, he argued, should no longer be conceived in terms of 'development' and 'progress', but in categories such as 'awakening', 'decision', 'moment' and 'existence'. Thus he claimed that Ranke, Mommsen and Dilthey had all been transformed overnight into the older generation, in contrast to which the new twentieth-century generation was interpreting history with 'verbal, active and militant' expressions. Strength for historical action comes from blood, race and faith. Those who did not

have it were 'free-floating intelligentsia', in contrast to which Freyer imagined himself to be rooted in the soil. He was the prototype of an adult involved in the German 'youth movement'. In the epilogue to his history of the nineteenth century, Croce had called this new age 'the age of excessive simplicity and credulity'.

## *Two German Institute Directors*

Freyer's lecture took place in the newly founded 'Cultural Department' of the Bibliotheca Hertziana, in the rooms that the *Reich* owed to a Jewish foundation. Thorwaldsen's bust of Humboldt still graced director Paul Hoppenstedt's room, while photographs of Hitler and of SA leaders with whom Herr Hoppenstedt was personally acquainted were now displayed on the wall. This nervous elderly gentleman with a respectable family background was given the nickname 'Aunt Paula' because of his effeminate character. He had taken part in Hitler's Munich putsch from afar; until 1933 he had been a jobless aesthete who had travelled widely in Italy, and as a result he obtained this quite respectable little post. Later on he was even made '*Kulturgauleiter*' (Cultural District Leader) for the whole of Italy. His library, which I was permitted to use, was still 'between the times'. Besides the obligatory National Socialist literature it contained much that was liberal and Jewish; for example, all Freud's works and erotic curiosities. Although I had told him that I was an emigrant, he invited us one evening to his lovely flat on the top floor of the Hertziana. The actual task of the Institute, the cultivation of intellectual exchanges between Italians and Germans, was limited to entertaining in style, to which one was not at all averse, and a few lectures, to which I too regularly received invitations.

Unfortunately, Hoppenstedt had not taken into consideration the fact that the division between Germans and Jews was more tightly drawn than his soft heart wanted to admit, and he personally had to put up with the fact that his more radical assistant, E., watched over and denounced him. Thus, one day Hoppenstedt found himself in the awkward situation of having to send his assistant round to me to withdraw an invitation that had already gone out, although he

was not afraid to ask us to keep quiet about it, since the publicizing of this affair would be quite embarrassing for the Institute. In 1936 the situation was considerably more clear-cut: by the time Heidegger gave his lecture in the Hertziana, I was excluded.

The only German scholar with an official post, whose house one could frequent even as a Jew, was Ludwig Curtius, director of the Archaeological Institute. I had met him during my early student days in Freiburg as a participant in Husserl's seminar. His character and personality did not tolerate the limited personal social relations required of him. Italians, Germans and Jews mixed in his elegant flat on the Corso Umberto. He was the centre of social life, and represented a culture that was still rooted in Goethe's epoch. His brilliant guided tours through the museums of Rome attracted a circle of people for whom the intellect and wit had greater weight than race. Neither did he hesitate to entrust his children to a housemaid of Jewish extraction, nor to have an emigrant give them music lessons. He did not attend the lectures of prominent National Socialist colleagues as a matter of principle, and he deliberately did not even invite Heidegger, although he knew him from Freiburg.

Without this humane and totally receptive man – who was equally knowledgeable about his subject as about European literature, music and philosophy – my social life in Rome would have been restricted to Italians and emigrants. Only an exile can appreciate the blissful relief one can obtain from the pleasure of congenial relations with a truly cultivated German. Curtius also followed the progress of my book on Burckhardt with friendly interest, and kept many an evening free for us to discuss it together on the roof-terrace of his hospitable home. I wanted to dedicate this work to him, but this proved impossible. The political witch-hunt against him had already endangered his position to such an extent that he could not accept a dedication from an emigrant. Only a few months after I had left Italy, his enemies succeeded in their plot against him: he was prematurely dismissed and pensioned off. His steadfastness had brought about his downfall, and the Institute, which had been founded a century earlier under Wilhelm von Humboldt and Bunsen, was placed in the hands of a young fellow whose only credentials were his services to the Party.

## *German Emigrants in Rome*

German propaganda has managed to convey the impression that an 'emigrant' is a type of person who voluntarily leaves the country to take revenge abroad by telling 'horror stories'. When Einstein was offered a chair abroad, a German newspaper demanded that the passports of all dismissed German university personnel be confiscated – that is to say, that they should not only lose their livelihood in Germany, but be forced to carry on vegetating in Germany.[20] This sadistic demand was made not in the *Stürmer* but in the *Tägliche Rundschau*, edited by Zehrer, which in 1933 had been one of the few still halfway decent newspapers, and which had therefore been forced to cease publication that very same year.

How prevalent the above-mentioned idea about emigrants was even among intellectuals was demonstrated to me by one of B.'s statements when he wrote that he did not rank *me* amongst emigrants, by whom he meant people like the writer Heinrich Mann or the editor of the Paris-based emigrants' newspaper. A similar conviction was expressed by the Birtners who, on saying goodbye, had given me the friendly advice not to associate with emigrants in Rome. This piece of advice – even if we ignore the fact that it was *the Germans* who no longer wanted to associate with Jews – was all the more farcical if one considered that their most intimate family friend was a typical Frankfurt Jew who stirred up anti-Semitic feelings within me, and whom I avoided in Rome.

From a historical point of view it is possible that the idea of the emigrant is based on the European experience of *émigrés* during the French Revolution. However, we were no political refugees, as in our own view we had been Germans for generations, while for the others we were suddenly Jews – German Jews who were going abroad only because Germany had deprived them of the conditions of their material and moral existence. The German-Jewish emigrants were overwhelmingly *exiles* – that is to say, people who had been expelled against their expectations and wishes. Even in 1935 I still met a German Jew in Italy who loyally wanted to return the remainder of his travel allowance to Germany so that he did not violate 'the duties of the German citizen', yet this

man had experienced things in his Frankfurt business that made a mockery of justice.

Racial percentages played no role for the expelled Jews, half-Jews and 'mixed marriages', since the precondition insinuated by the legislation was lacking: none of us perceived ourselves as an *ethnic* unit with the others, as a 'Jewish *Volk*', rather, our common fate increased our sensitivity to personal differences in the ways and modes of German-Jewish existence. Thus, in Rome we preferred the company of those Jews and half-Jews, who like ourselves, perceived themselves to be Germans, and if possible we avoided those all too Jewish Jews who together formed a kind of ghetto. These circles liked to fortify themselves by upholding the illusion of an early collapse of the Hitler regime. The vast majority, however, was completely apolitical in outlook. The situation may have been different in Prague, Zurich or Paris.

The painter Sandstein was a genuine native of Munich and, merely on account of his freelance profession as apolitical, as one could possibly be. He first attempted to run a photography shop, while his wife gave singing lessons. Later they opened a small bed-and-breakfast hotel to scrape a living for themselves and their adult son, who was in the *fascio* and wanted to become an Italian officer. Frankl, the son of a dismissed professor of art history, was totally non-Jewish in character and appearance. He was married to a small (Aryan) Swabian woman, and they lived in a converted garage with their child. Their lifestyle was so proletarian that they even built their scanty furniture themselves. He was employed by an Italian firm as an architect. Strauss, a dismissed lecturer in art history who had habilitated under Pinder, nurtured his musical talents. He studied hard at the Roman conservatory, gave piano lessons, and at the same time enjoyed his freedom in Rome. Fräulein Jastrow, the daughter of a well-known dismissed political economist, was an archaeologist by profession. She obtained an American grant and worked on Greek clay shards. She was reserved and anxious within a small social circle of her professional colleagues.

Fraenkel, a scholarly jurist and Meinecke student, who was married to an Aryan professor's daughter, had been a long-standing correspondent for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* until 1933. He suffered greatly on his removal, and was unable to take appropriate

steps to economize in his unemployed situation. He used up his savings, and only when these had melted away to nothing did he try to get freelance work from Austrian, Czech and Parisian newspapers. He assessed German affairs with a touching 'historical objectivity'. He was grateful for every dutiful visit his German professional colleagues still paid him now and then. In 1936, at the invitation of an Italian journal, he wrote an article on 'The Treatment of the Jews in the Legislation of the Third Reich' – an objective and informative essay, without a hint of a polemical note. Little did he suspect that he would be receiving the same 'treatment' from his Italians two years later – a true tragicomedy!

The classical philologist Walzer, married to one of the publisher Cassirer's daughters, had been a student of W. Jaeger. He came to Rome after losing his lecturing post to build a new academic existence under Gentile, which he did with energy, patience and perseverance. Both he and his wife were pronounced Jewish types, not least in the tenacity with which they asserted themselves under all circumstances and established new relationships. Loewald, whom I knew from Freiburg, married a Jewish woman in Rome. He worked for the Italian degree in medicine, which he had already obtained a long time before in Germany. Later he was employed as assistant at an Italian clinic. The physicians Behrens and Fleischmann had also taken their examinations for a second time, and set up a practice whose patients were Italians and emigrants. They were totally preoccupied with their professional progress and, merely because of that, disinclined to reflect on the past.

Lilli Gradenwitz, a very pretty and earnest half-Aryan girl whose father had been mayor of Kiel before the revolution, could actually have stayed in Germany, but preferred to resolve her half-and-half status by a whole decision. She had arrived in Italy penniless, and initially found a job as a housemaid. In Rome, where we met her, she was employed in a travel agency. In November 1938 her elderly father was arrested in his bed at four in the morning and taken from Kiel to a concentration camp; her mother was not told to which camp he was transported. An Italianized Tyrolean, a technician in Milan, married her a few days before the Italian race laws came into force. She was the classically pure type of Northern German girl, but she was deeply alarmed as soon as German events were

discussed, and would have preferred to forget all those things. Brendel, a brilliant student of Curtius and assistant at the Archaeological Institute, was married to a Jewish woman, and therefore had to resign his post. In 1936 he went to England. The Romanist scholar Dieckmann was in a similar situation, but less able to cope with it. Spitzer had procured him a post as assistant in Istanbul; he did not find this very satisfying, though, and this led him to resign.

I came across a pronounced emigrant type of personality in only three cases: the former Heidelberg Romanist scholar Leo Olschki; the already mentioned archaeologist Lehmann-Hartleben, whose wife was Aryan; and Krautheimer, who had lectured at the Marburg Institute of Art. Olschki was a member of a family that was indeed part of the international Eastern Jewry. 'Leonardo da Olschki', as we nicknamed him, was born in Italy, his brother, like his father having obtained Italian citizenship. He was a knowledgeable scholar – intelligent, astute and penetrating. Since he still received a German pension at that time, and was given an unpaid guest professorship in Rome, he was able to lead an untroubled life. Lehmann was in a considerably worse position, because he had three sons. He managed to find refuge in America only after two anxious and difficult years. Both survived through their mental alertness, but the political circumstances did not allow them to become detached from the past, and it was impossible to be in their company without the conversation immediately turning to the German or Jewish question. Pride as well as education made them believe that just as ancient culture was once propagated by Greek emigrants, it was now the mission of Jewish refugees from Germany to prevent the decline of European culture in America. Olschki was the last to leave Rome after he too was no longer permitted to lecture at its university, and became disgusted with Italy. Quite a few emigrants were arrested during Hitler's visit to Rome, while others eluded arrest and are even now still there, despite the race laws.

Robert Michels, Erik Peterson and Fräulein Hagemann could also be seen as emigrants of a kind. Michels, the well-known sociologist, had left Germany decades ago for political reasons. He was a professor in Perugia, and lived in Rome. In his tiny living-room, stuffed full of rare objects, he gathered around him a most colourful

social circle, with whom he switched with great ease from Italian into French or English, and if need be into German too. He had become an Italian citizen and a fascist, and loved to pretend in public that he barely understood his own mother tongue. He answered the telephone as 'Roberto Mikels', but the Italians never really came to trust Roberto. He was an interesting person with a ravaged face that reminded me of Strindberg. Besides that, he was matchless in his erudition, and an untiring writer. He died in Rome in 1936.

In a contrasting direction from that taken by Karl Barth, Peterson had drawn the final conclusions from the decline of liberal Protestantism in that he became a Catholic and went to Rome where, at the age of forty-three, he married a young, pretty Italian girl who bore him a child every year. They lived a retiring existence on the Aventin, where I frequently visited him and always received a friendly welcome and a good deal of stimulation. He suffered under his removal from Germany and was conscious of the fact that the schism dividing German intellectual life since 1933 had also adversely affected his own theological work. In Germany he primarily saw the destruction of Christian education, and he did not want his children to be subjected to it. Thus he remained in Rome, although Italian Catholicism did not satisfy him much. His conversion was essentially similar to that of the Romantics, although it was stronger on dogma. I often had the impression that he felt closer to Baudelaire than to the Early Fathers, on whom he gave lectures at the Papal Institute. For him the 'Jewish Question' was a theological problem that could be resolved only in a Christian way, and his ingenious work on *Die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden* (The Church of Jews and Atheists) does not lack a Christian anti-Semitic tone. The fact that I sided with neither the Jewish faith nor Christianity was a mystery that disquieted him, because it was in polar opposition to his own life decision.

Fräulein Hagemann, too, no longer wanted to return to Germany, although she was neither politically nor racially stigmatized. She was one of those rare Germans whose heart had been so deeply wounded by National Socialist barbarity and anti-Semitism that she preferred to stay abroad. When we first met her she was governess to Curtius's daughters.

## *Russian Emigrants in Italy and Japan*

The Russian emigrant J. Schor was in a class of his own. He was expelled first from Russia and then from Germany, whereupon he lived with his wife in Rome as a writer before moving on to Palestine. Owing to his philosophical Russian nature, he was much more thoroughly inured to the vicissitudes of life than the emigrants from Germany I got to know, most of whom adhered to their bourgeois lifestyle. His refined, intelligent and winning ways made him very pleasant company. Through him I made the acquaintance of the seventy-year old writer V. Ivanov, who managed to make ends meet by giving French and Russian language lessons. The unique character of the Russian emigrants was again confirmed to me in Japan, where in summer 1939 I met a gentleman who called himself Monsieur de B. No one would have guessed that until 1924 he had been a diplomat at the Holy See, then the owner of a ladies' lingerie shop in Paris, and now he teaches German, Russian and French at a high school in a Japanese provincial town. His morale was very high, due to his Nansen passport,* he socialized with the English and the Italians, with Nazis and Jews, and always remained 'M. de B.', with an elegant walking stick and a precious ring on his finger.

During the same summer in Yokohama I rediscovered, after a period of twenty years, a Freiburg student friend, the musician K. Shapiro. He had grown an Old Testament beard and, in his wilful way, led quite a contented life in a small seaside house. His charming Jewish wife had already borne him five sons, and gave piano lessons. Since the day on which I visited him was a Jewish holiday, which he strictly observed, our conversation turned to our Jewishness, about which we had never talked in Freiburg. He explained to me that in the past he had believed himself to be a 'European', until he finally discovered that he was not a Russian educated in Germany and France but indeed a Jew whom others rightly distinguished from themselves. He was disappointed that I did not share

**Translator's Note*: Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930), explorer, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1923, had become the League of Nations' high commissioner in 1920, in which capacity he pioneered the *Nansen Passport*, an identification card for displaced persons (1922).

his interest in orthodox Jewishness, and from this point onwards he regarded me as a 'Christian'. His personal philosophy was so unusual that it formed no basis for good conversations. He had become an absolute crank who alienated everyone, thereby lending support to his self-consciousness. The Russian Revolution had completely dispersed his family to Japan, Paris and Africa.

## *The Expulsion of the Jews from Italy*

In 1938 most of our Roman acquaintances and friends were expelled once again, this time by the Italian race laws, after five hard years' struggle to establish a meagre existential basis. They had six months to fight for a visa to somewhere in the whole wide world, which had never felt so small, and to secure a passage on board a ship. The Sandsteins sold their bed-and-breakfast hotel to circus acrobats to obtain money for their journey; they emigrated to Bolivia, where they had a friend. The majority went to the United States; one went to England.

A year later, when Germany concluded the Pact with Russia, the Italian laws had become superfluous, because the Axis had already lost much of its attraction. Despite the more lenient form they took, these laws were fundamentally even more humiliating than the German ones, because Italy had, after all, offered a refuge to the emigrants before expelling them again. Even of those savings that had been legally transferred from Germany, German emigrants were entitled to take only 2000 lire (then the equivalent of about 500 *Reichsmarks*) with them. All their effort, work, expenditure and hopes had suddenly come to nothing. When I enquired about the fate of our mutual acquaintances in a letter from Japan to our Italian friend A., he felt embarrassed and asked me to keep quiet about 'such questions' in letters: 'the less said the better!'.

I am not talking about myself when I maintain that all these emigrants – and there were relatively few in Rome – were harmless and decent people, concerned exclusively with their own survival and not even remotely involved in any propagandistic activity against Germany or the fascist regime in Italy. From most of them I have never heard a spiteful word against Germany. They were

silent about it, and tried to forget the loss they suffered in the everyday work of the present. They wanted to accustom themselves to their new life, while at the same time enjoying what was still enjoyable and cheering – and there was still a great deal of that in Italy. The necessity to settle down abroad accorded with their capacity to assimilate. In contrast, I personally did not encounter *the* Jew as a unity of blood and faith.

## *A Japanese and a German Naivety*

Initially I myself was more aware of the particularity of my personal situation than of the general aspect of the Jewish fate. This naturally corresponded to my entire upbringing and choice, which were both based on the emancipation of Jews to Germanness. But those who have adapted their inner and outer existence accordingly become particularly sensitive to certain Jewish attributes which keep Jews at a distance from Germans, and which they therefore fight in themselves or others. Gradually, however, I came to understand that the particular is not the most important element if a general destiny oppresses Jews as a whole. The thing I consciously avoided doing in Rome became a matter of course for me in Japan: to enlighten foreigners deceived by German propaganda about the conduct of Germans whenever the opportunity arose. Only a few Germans can readily distinguish between what is Jewish and what is German, so how could foreigners make a judgement about it if they are not concerned with the question? My Japanese colleagues were incapable of it, no matter how much they read about it in the newspapers. Most of them were totally naive, and some of them said 'Jews' when they meant England and American capital, which they needed in China as much as it caused them embarrassment.

The mathematician K., a friendly and scholarly professor at Sendai University, seemed a classical example of the former case. One day he came to see me for the correction of an essay written in German – he knew that I was Jewish. He had received an invitation from a German mathematician to co-author a publication which was to contain a German, an Italian and a Japanese contribution, and was due to appear in Germany. Mr K. felt most

honoured, and wrote a foreword in which he expressed the hope that the collaboration between the three mathematicians would strengthen the tripartite pact between Japan, Germany and Italy in science too. In the same breath he expressed his highest admiration for Albert Einstein, without whose scholarly work modern algebra would not have progressed. At the end of the foreword he thanked me for my help with corrections. When I tried to get the point through to him that it would be better to omit my name, and that the printing of his sentence about Einstein could cause serious problems for his German colleague, this harmless man was suddenly nonplussed, so remote to him seemed the notion that in Germany even 'pure' mathematics could be stifled by National Socialism. While he was well aware that Einstein no longer taught in Germany, he had never realized what his name signified in contemporary Germany. Nor had he ever read Einstein's book *Mein Weltbild* (*The World as I See It*, 1934), in which he documented the story of his dismissal. He simply lived in the land of his figures, and beyond that he read newspapers from which he gathered that only Italy and Germany had a deep 'appreciation' for Japan's new Oriental 'order'.

Less harmless was the anatomist F., who had conferred with me about the ways and means of helping a Jewish friend to leave Germany. At the very same time he joined the Executive Committee of the German–Japanese Cultural Association, which was to prepare the ground for anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda in Japan, and now even in Sendai.

When I sought to disseminate the necessary information in such cases, I did so in the consciousness of the obvious objection that emigrants are too biased to be able to make objective judgements about things concerning themselves. In Rome Herr Naumann had used this cheap pseudo-argument against me when he had run out of things to say. I retorted by asking him whether he actually thought that he was less 'biased' because he was a National Socialist, a German specialist and an Aryan? No one lacks prejudices, neither Herr Naumann nor I, but the question is whether one is prepared to see through them or whether one elevates one's prejudice to a dogma as a 'racial heritage', and thus from start to finish denies anyone who does not share this 'heritage' the

possibility of understanding. I know many emigrant Jews – I shall only name Erich Kahler here – who even today are willing and capable of understanding what is German, but not a single National Socialist German who summons up that kind of self-criticism without which one can never do justice to someone really different.

The Jews' special gift of assimilating with others, and even understanding what counts *against* them (the best and most biting jokes about Jews have always been invented by Jews), is based on a self-transparency and self-criticism that are peculiar to the Jew. Jews know very clearly who they are. And for that reason the German and the Jew never see eye to eye on this question: German Jews are always more likely to understand what is German than modern pseudo-Germans can grasp what is Jewish, no matter how many institutes for 'Research into the Jewish Question' they may found. But when the contemporary German accuses the emigrant Jew of inventing 'horror stories', the only reply that can be given is: you yourselves have transformed us into your enemies who are forced to desire England's victory. As for the horror stories, these are, after all, printed in every German newspaper, even though they appear under different headlines from those in the rest of the world. When Göring, six months before the 20 per cent – more recently the 25 per cent – tax 'penalty' imposed on Jews, assessed the balance of Jewish wealth for the planned robbery, the headline in *Völkischer Beobachter* read: 'The economic position of Jews is clear-cut'.

## *Jewish and Aryan Fates at Marburg University*

The fates of my Marburg colleagues were as follows: the political economist Röpke and the orientalist Götze, both Aryan, were the first to leave Germany for political reasons, and to find suitable posts abroad. Spitzer was offered a chair in Istanbul; from there he went to Johns Hopkins University in the United States. On his departure he brought in Auerbach to fill his Turkish post. While in Rome, Krautheimer found a minor post at an American college. Rohde, who was forced to give up his lecturing post because of his Jewish wife, found a job in Ankara. Jacobsthal was on friendly terms with an English colleague who managed to secure a post for

him in Oxford. He wrote to me in his laconic and apt way that 'the whole business' was a matter of 'intelligent training and personal hygiene', without which one would become nervous and go to the dogs.

Frank and Friedländer had stayed in Germany, and decided to emigrate only after the persecution of Jews in November 1938 which led to Friedländer being taken to a concentration camp. Both are now in the USA. Of the younger acquaintances who have not yet habilitated, Leo Strauss and Jacob Klein initially spent some time in England before finding jobs in America. The student Boschwitz just managed to obtain his doctorate in 1933, then moved to Palestine with his family. However, he has not been able to settle down there, and is now endeavouring to go to America. Walther Marseille went from Vienna to New York, where he currently lives in poverty and debt.

Gadamer became a professor in Leipzig after many intrigues, despite his lack of 'political merits'. Despite their fundamentally positive attitude, his rare and ponderously reflective letters could not reduce the distance between our temperaments that had already separated us in Marburg. He would not accept my decision to withdraw from my role as godfather of his child, which I had assumed more than ten years ago, in view of the political separation between Germans and Jews. Gerhard Krüger, whom I respected as a lecturer and a person without ever being close to him, has taken sides with the Confessing Church against Hitler. Before he eventually attained a professorship he had to tolerate much bullying because of his steadfastness. Bultmann did not waver in his dedication to his theological work, and owing to his firmness of character and his dry factual objectivity, he has survived the perils of the age. Lisa de Boor, who visited us in Rome during summer 1935 with Goebel, has remained the same brave and intelligent, able and sympathetic friend that she has been to us from the beginning. She has brought up her three now adult children in an admirable manner and, despite all the difficulties, she pursues her foreign connections with anthroposophists in Dornach, friends in Sweden and France, and brothers and sisters in America. At the same time she and her children are involved in German events and National Socialist organizations in a positive way, not allowing anxious caution and

a refusal to take risks to diminish their inner freedom towards German affairs. Such a candid attitude is, however, the exception to the rule, and is to be found more frequently among women than among men.

Marburg University has shrunk at the same rate as the building of barracks progressed, and the number of theology students has been reduced from 700 to around 120. The dominant figure in the foreground of all the bustling activity is E. Jaensch, a bachelor of about fifty with strong psychopathic tendencies. He had enthusiastically thrown himself into the movement to experience his rejuvenation in the 'awakening of youth'. All his innumerable lectures were about 'the German human being'. The so-called Marburg School (Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer), being a Jewish-liberal affair, is no longer listed under the philosophical faculty in the last 'Guide to Marburg University' for 1939–40.[21] All the greater is the emphasis on populist subjects, such as military science, racial studies and anthropology, which were aiming to produce the new German human being. Among my former colleagues it is the youngest and least distinguished who have been the most rapidly promoted to full professorships. Besides a photograph of the rector, the university guide contains that of a youngster of about twenty, the university student leader and 'deputy district student leader'. In the National Socialist 'laws of life' of the German student printed as an introduction, there is much talk about leadership and mission, action and discipline.

The laws read as follows:

> (1) German student, it is not necessary that you live, but rather that you fulfil your duty to your *Volk*! Whatever becomes of you, act as a German. (2) Honour is the highest law and greatest dignity for the German man. An offence against one's honour can be avenged only by blood. Your honour is loyalty to your Volk and to yourself. (3) To be a German means that you have character. You too are called upon to fight for the freedom of the German spirit. Seek for the inherent truths resolved upon by your *Volk*. (4) Licentiousness and a lack of ties do not represent freedom. There is more freedom in serving than in following your own

commands. The future of Germany is dependent on your faith, your enthusiasm and your preparedness to fight. (5) Those who lack the imagination to conceive of anything will achieve nothing, and you cannot light anything if you do not have a flame kindled within yourself. Have the courage for admiration and reverence. (6) One is born to be a National Socialist, even more one is brought up to become one, but most of all one educates oneself to be one. (7) If there is some thing mightier than fate, it is your courage to bear it without wavering. What does not kill you makes you stronger still. Praised be what hardens you. (8) Learn to live in an orderly manner. Training and discipline are the foundations of any community and the beginning of all education. (9) As a leader, be rigid in your own fulfilment of duty, resolute in representing what is necessary, helpful and good, never petty in the asssessment of human weaknesses, magnanimous in recognizing others' necessaries of life and modest with your own. (10) Be a comrade! Be chivalrous and modest! Be a model in your personal life! The measure of your moral maturity will be seen in your relations with people. Be at one in thought and action. Model your life on the *Führer*'s!

This German student – who in the first place, has to know that it is unnecessary for him to live – has all the virtues of 'the German human being' as such. The formulation of the laws of life deviates from the National Socialist framework in only one place – namely, in the ninth law, which is reminiscent of a Goethe quotation that is discordant with all the rest.

## *The Echo of German Events in Italy*

The external events that concerned me between 1934 and 1936, during my stay in Italy, were as follows. Only a few months after I had left Germany, Deputy Chancellor von Papen made his now famous speech at Marburg University about the internal political situation, which was probably inspired by the circle around Hindenburg. Its publication was immediately suppressed by Goebbels. It was a portent of the imminent crisis that erupted in

June 1934, which led to the assassination of von Papen's Secretary, General Schleicher, Captain Röhm, Gregor Strasser, and around 150 prominent Party figures. The impression this event made in Italy was plain: there was a deep sense of shock at the complete lack of scruples and the dark violence of these outrages. Whereas the Germans calmed down about it within the space of a few weeks, in Italy the memory of the assassination of a single socialist (T.) still made people's blood boil ten years later. While Besseler was in Rome, I told him how the Italians' sense of justice had been scandalized by the events of June 1934, and he could not understand it at all. To him it was merely a matter of 'form' whether people who had become a danger to the state were eliminated with or without a court sentence. This total insensitivity to justice and the rule of law is very characteristic of all Germans educated by National Socialism.

Precisely the same naive astonishment was expressed in Hitler's speech to the *Reichstag* in October 1939, in which he made his 'peace offer' after the crushing of Poland. It contained a passage saying that Germany had been reproached for the 'methods' it used, but this was sheer English hypocrisy; ultimately it was 'not methods but success' that were decisive. These sentences reveal the total contrast not only between Germany and England, but also between barbarians and civilized people. But for Germans this is merely a formal distinction, although their experience of the period 1914–18 and their sovereign contempt for treaties and norms should have taught them that forms are no simple formalities. In the same speech Hitler made the amazingly naive remark that he found the enmity shown by British statesmen 'inexplicable', and was personally 'frankly shocked' by it.

The Germans will never be able to understand why their methods are loathed. In 1916 there was still one philosopher, Max Scheler, who, in the midst of war, was taking pains to explain to the Germans the 'origins of the hatred towards Germans', whereas the present *Reich* philosophers think along exactly the same lines as their leadership, because the philosophy of 'life' and 'existence' itself has made any philosophy of law impossible. If the law is merely an expedient for a people, it is indeed absurd to speak of the law at all.

We spent the summer of 1934 in Pozzetto near Rapallo in the house 'Stellamare', with German emigrants who made ends meet by running a *pensione*. The villa they rented was most beautifully situated between olive-tree-lined hills, and the roof garden overlooked the bay as far as Portofino. In autumn we travelled from there to Genoa, and I continued the journey via Venice to Prague to attend the International Congress of Philosophy. Only here, further east, is it possible to get a true measure of the nature of European cities, and particularly such wonderful concentrations of European culture and history. Before I continued my journey, I made a detour up to the old fortresses in the mountains above Genoa, and to Finalmarina, where I had been kept a prisoner of war twenty years earlier. The heavy doors of the metre-thick walls were open, the windows were smashed and the rooms were empty. All traces of our imprisonment had disappeared, and the few people whom I met on the way no longer knew anything about it.

## *The Prague Congress of Philosophy (1934)*

The central theme of the Congress, presided over by Dr Benès, was the 'Crisis of Democracy' about which the French and Czechs in particular got excited, while the few delegates from Germany (Heyse, Hellpach and Emge) stayed in the background and felt quite uncomfortable in this international milieu which contradicted all German principles. Nikolai Hartmann spoke to me in a friendly manner, and seemed to have forgotten my resignation from his Marburg seminar. Italy sent the well-known fascist jurist G. del Vecchio, among others. Recently, by chance, I came across a letter of his in which he complained bitterly about his dismissal due to his Jewish extraction and, with embarrassing fervour tried to set about having his books translated into Japanese to find a refuge abroad for his damaged self-esteem. I also became acquainted with the publisher Felix Meiner, and offered him the manuscript of my book on Nietzsche. However, he was too apprehensive on political grounds to consider it.

We spent the rest of the summer and part of the autumn with the Lehmanns in St Agnello di Sorrento. Sharing a household with

them was simple but delightful; the splendour of the weather and the charm of the landscape did not abate for a single day. An excursion to the 'Il Deserto' monastery and a walk before dawn from Ravello down to Amalfi, and then from Positano back to Sorrento, was, despite the shimmering heat, one of those delights that lighten years of misery and are always remembered. In the winter in Rome I completed my book on Nietzsche, for which I found a personally interested editor in Dr R. K., and in B. a most obliging publisher.

## *The Revocation of My Teaching Licence and My Journey to Germany*

In spring 1935 my teaching licence was revoked, although by law I was still a university lecturer and there was no legal justification for its revocation. In May, therefore, I travelled to Berlin, where I was told at the Ministry that the chairman of the lecturers' association had caused this measure to be taken without any particular charges having been brought against me. Armed with this information, I returned to Marburg to bring about a final and direct confrontation about my existence in Germany. I visited the dean, who was somewhat taken aback that I had evaded the usual stages of appeal, but he quickly gave me to understand that he was not on the side of the lecturers' association. He was an upright man who had his daily share of troubles with protests from Party quarters. In principle he welcomed the chance to impose his will on them for once. As I no longer had anything to lose, I won a moral as well as a material victory. During the three meetings with the chairman of the lecturers' association, M., his deputy and the dean, the following was established: the Ministry had delegated the decision to the lecturers' association. In my presence they talked their way out of it by blaming the Ministry and the dean, and when I put them under pressure it finally emerged that a backer of the lecturers' association had indirectly effected the revocation of my teaching licence. This is what 'free responsibility' was all about. I declared to these honourable gentlemen that it was pitiful for them to recognize the 'front clause', then to evade it by stealth and not to take responsibility for their action. They should at least be consistent enough

publicly to remove the legal protection accorded to ex-servicemen; then everything would be all right, and I would not waste another breath on them. They then demanded that I withdraw the defamation of their characters, to which the dean then retorted that they could not require me to do that. He then took me to the registrar, who was, as always, correct and conscientious. I owe it to him and to the dean that they paid out 200 Marks per month to me in Italy for another six months, whereas the chairman of the lecturers' association had the impudence to try to prevent even this minimal easing of my situation.

During these three days, which allowed me to see my friends only hurriedly, I met a Japanese who had come to Marburg to study under my supervision, not realizing that I was already in Italy. I was quite affected by so much cordial goodwill from someone who was a complete stranger. He heaped presents upon me and advised me to go to Japan, where I was better known through my habilitation thesis than I had been aware. On his suggestion I later wrote to Baron Kuki, whom I knew slightly from his studies in Marburg and who was now professor of philosophy in Kyoto.

## *The Return to Italy via Paris*

I travelled with the permitted allowance of 10 Marks from Marburg via Basle to Paris to discuss my situation with the director of the Rockefeller Foundation. The extension of my fellowship for a second year caused me great trouble, because this grant was conditional on the recipient returning to his or her former academic post on its expiry, and this was now no longer possible for me. In consequence the absurd situation arose that because I had lost my post in Germany I was also to lose my foreign research grant. Fortunately, the director was sympathetic and found a way round it by approving a 'grant-in-aid' with which I could make ends meet for another year. In Paris I visited our Marburg French language lecturer, Bernard Groethuysen, and Alexandre Koyré, whom I knew from Husserl's seminar. The Paris cafés were full of young German emigrants. On purchasing some newspapers I was greatly

astonished: in Italy and Germany I had already become so very unused to any free commentary and criticism that it came as a great surprise to me to find three different opinions on the measures taken by the government in three different papers rather than simply a 'single stew'.

In Poveromo near Massa Carrara I rejoined my wife, and we led an idyllic life in the Casa Venturi. The house was located in the middle of a light stone-pine forest sandwiched between the magnificent wide beach and the Apennines. Very early in the morning suntanned girls, carrying baskets on their heads, delivered fruit, vegetables and fish to our door. Neither was there a lack of company. Dora M. and Frau von G., who ran a boarding-house, lived in very close proximity. In this cheerful environment I began to elaborate my book on Burckhardt. Another treatise which I had written while I was still in Marburg, on the relations of Marx and Kierkegaard to Hegel's perfection of philosophy – which contained the chief features of a book on German development 'from Hegel to Nietzsche' that was to be completed only in Japan – was returned to me by Kantstudien after a year's wait with the excuse that for 'technical reasons' it was not possible to print my essay as promised. These technical reasons consisted of Marx being taboo in Germany, and its author not being an Aryan. In a lamentable letter the editor asked me to appreciate his difficult position. I replied by saying that mine was even more difficult. Soon after that the poor man was himself dismissed by the editorial board. It was not his fault that he could no longer honour his agreement of 1934 a year later.

In summer 1935 we stayed in Rome in spite of the great heat wave because the W.s, who were travelling to Germany for their holidays, had asked us to take care of their pretty flat in the Via delle Sette Scale near San Pietro in Vincoli. We had Frau Frankl to stay with us for a few weeks because she had been taken ill. I worked on Burckhardt, and in September Frau de Boor came to visit us. When my book was finished, Herr B. from Runde Publishing House in Berlin was no longer able to assume responsibility for its publication since doing so would have placed his publishing company at risk. After much effort I succeeded, upon Professor Kaegi's recommendation, in winning over the Basle publisher B.

Schwabe for it in 1936. After some hesitation I had decided against the offer from the Vita Nova publishing house in Lucerne because the older Schwabe publishers seemed a more promising distribution outlet for the book in Germany.

In autumn we moved into a two-room flat in Monteverde, Via Giovanni Pantaleo. The beds and most essential furniture were lent to us by a German sculptor who maintained a flat in Rome while living in Germany during the time leading up to his own permanent emigration. Prospects presented themselves at the South American University of Bogotá, so we were taught Spanish by two kind sisters from Bogotá who had been living in Rome for six years.

## *Travelling by Air to Istanbul*

In December I flew from Brindisi via Athens to Istanbul to give a lecture at Leo Spitzer's invitation, and to sound out my chances there. A telegram from my wife had informed me that negotiations with Bogotá had broken down in the meantime, and the prospects in Istanbul did not look promising. In D.'s company I roamed through old Constantinople and spent the remainder of the day most agreeably as a guest of Spitzer in his Pera flat. I met Richard von Mises, A. Rüstow, Reichenbach and other German professors, who had all lost their posts in Germany and now taught at the Turkish university. I also had a reunion with Röpke; he had stayed that same 'sunny boy' whom I had known in Marburg. The most enjoyable parts of the visit were my conversations with Spitzer and the splendid view over the Bosporus from the tower in front of the university. This was no longer the Mediterranean South of Marseilles, Genoa and Palermo, with which I was familiar; one already sensed the Russian and Oriental elements behind the bluish-black and greenish waves, and the bleak expanse beyond.

On the stormy return flight we again made an emergency landing in Athens. I immediately climbed the Acropolis. It lay there in its dry and cerebral beauty, and the yellow-tinted marble of the temple contrasted wonderfully with the clearest and purest

blue of the sky. The museum displayed its exquisite treasures. A few Japanese who walked through and took photographs of each other seemed to strike a physically discordant note in these surroundings.

While driving to the airport the next morning we collided with a farmer's cart, and the pilot injured a leg. Thus we looked forward to the continuation of our flight with some trepidation. But when we were high up in the air above the clouds, and the Greek islands had disappeared, he cheerfully took the *Marc Aurelio*, a Roman comic paper, from his jacket pocket and read it at the controls as though he was sitting in a barber's shop.

## *The Offer of an Appointment in Japan, and Farewell to Germany and Europe*

In the meantime the war with Abyssinia had got under way, and some months later motorized columns rolled up the road to Addis Ababa. A film shown in Rome made it vividly clear that the glorious heroic deeds were performed by machines. At Easter 1936 we set out on a wonderful car journey with a German Catholic to Volterra, San Gimignano and Siena. Negotiations for a post at the University of North Carolina had failed, it was impossible even to find a job as German language tutor in Italy and, as previously mentioned, I had not succeeded in securing the prospective post in Bogotá. Then in June 1936 I received a telegram from Japan offering me a chair at the University of Sendai. This offer had been negotiated by Professor Kuki. As I was to learn later, the German Embassy and the German Cultural Institute had unsuccessfully tried to block my appointment on racial grounds.

In July we enjoyed a glorious three-hour flight from Rome over the Alps to Munich, where we had a peaceful stay with my mother in the Rösl family's comfortable flat. After much effort I was granted a letter of credit to the amount of 1000 Marks for Italy and the surrender of 200 Marks from my frozen bank account for the defraying of expenses incurred during our stay in Munich. From then on, all the remainder of my father's inheritance that I had to leave behind in Germany was lost for good.

For two wonderful weeks I then worked in Basle's Burckhardt archive, while my wife visited her father and sisters to say goodbye. After that we went for a few days to Ambach at Lake Starnberg, where we were able to stay at an inn that I had known for decades without encountering any objections. Dr P., one of my former teachers with whom I enjoyed friendly relations since school days, spent his holidays there, and made pleasant company. He was completely unmoved by the 'awakening' of his nation. He jokingly recounted his experiences with the growing generation whose 'character formation' consisted of being able to 'co-ordinate' in their school essays and in all other respects where necessary, but of being equally able to change the line according to requirement. Once more I passed our former summer house in Seeheim, and went up to the pretty little church of Holzhausen with its gigantic lime tree in the foreground – memories of the carefree days of a long-bygone age before the war. Hardly a house belonging to our former acquaintances was still in the same hands, except that of the Rösl family, which has retained its fine property in the Ammerland throughout war, inflation and revolution.

In Munich I then took leave of Sigrid Christensen, whom I had met in Copenhagen, my old teacher and friend Esenbeck, and Marianne Walther, whom I knew from as long ago as the Munich free student association, and whose second husband was acting as my solicitor and kindly attended to my affairs until even this legal protection was removed from me (after the end of 1938 Aryan solicitors were prohibited from representing and advising Jewish clients). My publisher B. travelled specially to Munich to say goodbye to me, and similarly, two of my Marburg students, Wanda von K. and F.K., had arranged their schedule in such a way that they were able to meet me once more in Munich before I left Europe. Subsequently, however, they were no longer in a position to keep up our correspondence without risk to themselves.

Shortly after that we flew over the Alps and the brown-baked chain of the Apennines back to Rome, where we made final arrangements for the journey to Japan. My mother visited us in September, happy about my professorial appointment but at the same time sad about the great distance that was now to separate us.

## *Trouble with Publishers*

I had just completed the final corrections on the Burckhardt book when I received a tortuous letter from my Swiss publisher saying that he had to withdraw from the contract. He had shown the manuscript to a German journalist who had assured him that such a book could not be sold in Germany, and might possibly even be banned. Herr Schwabe declared that he would not be able to risk his 'good reputation', and offered to find another publisher. I replied by saying that his good reputation must be in a sorry state if he judged it by the publication principles of the Third Reich, and thereby denied the independent mind of his Swiss compatriot Burckhardt. However, I had no practical means at my disposal to force him to publish the book, and I could consider myself lucky that Dr R. of the Vita Nova publishing house was willing to accept the book for publication despite my earlier rejection of his offer.[22] In fact my book could be sold in Germany only with the greatest difficulty, and only a very limited number of copies could be distributed. While it was not directly banned, it was none the less considered 'undesirable', so that orders were dependent on the personal courage of the buyer and the bookseller.

A hasty journey to Poveromo to see Dora M. (she was an Austrian Jewish woman and therefore had to leave Italy, where she had lived for twenty years, in 1938), a reunion with Boschwitz in Pisa and saying goodbye to friends in Rome – Antoni and Cantimori, Candeli and Lilia d'Albore, Gentile and Pettazoni, Buonaiuti, Tilgher and Peterson – consumed the final weeks. Thereupon we returned our few pieces of furniture to the sculptor N., who had just returned, and through whom I managed to get the rest of my Italian currency to England shortly before the collapse of the lira. The remainder of our assets was distributed among the Frankls. In Naples we spent a wonderful evening with Franco Lombardi, who accompanied us the following day – it was the 11th of October – to the Japanese liner *Suwa Maru*. I found the farewell from Italy more painful than that from the homeland which had denied me even the foreigner's rights to hospitality. To be sure, we had many worries during these two

and a half years, and the writing of applications, the half-expectations and the total disappointments were frequently a cause of depression, but there was also much that was enjoyable and moments that were extending the meaning of life; there was satisfaction with work, human sociability, exquisite excursions, and Rome day after day.

# *1936–39*

## *Arrival in Japan*

Here I pass over the thirty-three-day sea voyage from Naples via the Suez Canal to Colombo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai to Kobe. It was our first journey to the East and therefore, at the same time, the first opportunity to get an impression of the supremacy of the English nation. Thus far we had only ever travelled to the southern countries of Europe – to France, Italy and Dalmatia – and had little idea of the colonizing power and self-confidence of the Anglo-American world, which for Japan too remains essentially the most authoritative one, despite Japan's temporary alliance with Italy and Germany.

The exceptional politeness and courtesy with which we were received in Japan and then shepherded to Sendai surpassed all expectations. In Sendai a university house was put at our disposal; in January our furniture and books followed, and we soon felt at home, which sometimes led to our slip of the tongue, saying 'Marburg' instead of 'Sendai'. The allure of the new and the profusion of foreign impressions lent a new impetus to our existence, so that we did not initially notice our isolation (we were the only Germans in Sendai besides Kurt Singer) and the physical strain of this transplantation. We only gradually made the acquaintance of Americans from the mission and a few Catholics (most of whom were Canadian, two Italians and one Swiss) living in Sendai.

## *An English Colleague*

I had another European colleague at the university, the sixty-year-old Englishman H., who had been living in Japan for over ten years and was considered a well-known poet – at least by the Japanese.

He had a much younger wife who admired and looked after him, two dogs and around fifty canaries. He lived in Japan without speaking a single word of Japanese and not knowing more of the country than the view from the window of his room. He read much fine literature, wrote a poem now and then, smoked many small pipes, regularly spent two hours over his afternoon tea, and even his meals never varied in the slightest. Thus he lived in absolute 'privacy', and he was in touch with the rest of the world only by mail and book orders. He loved old book illustrations, and I secured the purchase of the complete 1840 volumes of the *Münchner Fliegende Blätter* for him.

He had a very specific idea of what constituted 'freedom' and 'personality', and if one was listening to him, he liked to expand on his personal philosophy. His face was very expressive and well shaped: his prominent nose stood between two large protruding eyes; his mouth was broad, humorous and sensual. A physical disability was his reason and excuse for maintaining an unchanging lifestyle - he treated it as a kind of sickness bonus. In summer 1938 he returned to England and from there he went on to America. He enjoyed high esteem among the Japanese because he did not interfere with them in the slightest, nor adopt any of their ways.

## *An Italian Excellency and a German Privy Councillor in Sendai*

I encountered Italy and Germany even in Sendai on two separate occasions. In spring 1937, the fascist *Eccellenza* Tucci, whom I had met previously at Gentile's house in Rome, came to Japan to found an Italian Cultural Institute and to give lectures on the results of his travels in Tibet. He also came to our university, and took the opportunity to visit us. The conversation touched on Germany's race policy, and he expressed the opinion that such barbarity would be quite impossible in Italy. He gave his lecture in thundering English. In every other sentence he emphasized how important and significant his research findings were; the Japanese were not a little bemused, since their good manners dictate that one does not talk about oneself at all, or at most in a disparaging way. He did not

stand still for a moment during his lecture, and if the slide appeared upside down on the screen, as it most often did, he immediately became very impatient. He was all expression and performance, and therefore completely unlike the Japanese. His wife thought that the Japanese were sure to be a very melancholic people.

Eduard Spranger came from Germany to Japan that same year. He had a Japanese translator by his side who accompanied him on all his lecture tours, and he gave no fewer than eighty lectures in barely twelve months. Most of them served as cultural-philosophical window-dressing for the fledgling German-Japanese friendship. On reading detailed reviews about it in the Japanese-American newspaper, I could not comprehend at first how the same man who had tendered his resignation in 1933[23] could now, as an official representative of National Socialist Germany, be using his education to convince both himself and his audience that Germany and Japan (about which he had only read books before his arrival) had a common historical mission and a deep affinity. He drew parallels between the Samurai and the Prussian officer, Japanese self-sacrifice and Germanic heroism, *Bushido* and the Germanic code of honour, the Japanese worship of ancestors and the new German idea of race, and further nonsense like that. It seemed as if Spranger had now, after all, found that 'access to the younger generation' which he had regretted not finding in 1933.

The alternative from which I proceeded when I could not reconcile Spranger's conduct of the earlier period and now was, however, inappropriate. Average German citizens like him were not actually confronted with the question of whether they should either decidedly approve or disapprove of National Socialism, rather, they were faced with a dilemma. Like it or not, he had to come to terms with the fact that he was a German and had to live in Germany. He was much too harmless to be capable of being a radical. And thus Spranger too surely saw it as his patriotic duty to ignore his doubts and put himself at the service of something that was, moreover, honourable, and removed him for a year from his Berlin colleagues. The good Privy Councillor – his type was that of a German high-school teacher – in principle behaved no differently from all those Germans who, although momentarily confronted with the question of whether they should resign in 1933, soon

thereafter thought 'better' of it and assumed joint responsibility for a rotten cause – I am thinking of Schacht, von Neurath and von Papen. Nobody will happily and voluntarily give up a normal and successful career as long as he is still considered useful, and German cultural policy exploited this situation in that it sent men like him abroad or to the border posts if they were too awkward and useless at home. Resolute and clear-sighted men like Rauschning are rare. Looking at it from the standpoint of German psychology, it comes as no surprise that Spranger and others represented something abroad that they were not back home. Spranger was essentially a German professor, an idealist and intellectual; one could not, therefore, expect too much political clarity from him.

After our meal together at the house of the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, he privately took me aside to complain about the National Socialist director of the German Cultural Institute and the intrigues in Berlin, and to describe the deteriorating situation at German universities. The conclusion of his Sendai lecture was characteristic of the dwindling idealism of the type of education represented by Spranger. As was to be expected, he cited from Goethe's '*Westöstlicher Diwan*' (East–West Divan) – the well-known verse: 'The Orient belongs to God, the Occident belongs to God' [*Gottes ist der Orient, Gottes ist der Okzident*'], while both together belonged to the Devil. Before his return journey to Germany he was kind enough to send me a letter, in which every sentence for the German ear came from that 'land of education' which had already vanished by Nietzsche's time. He wrote:

> It is now appropriate to read a few verses from *Hermann and Dorothea* about the travellers and in addition to that [*sic!*] Hölderlin's song of fate.* And it must be some consolation that it is world history which drives and banishes us rather than chance misfortune. It comes down to the same question posed during the war: 'Is it meant for me or for you?' Ultimately it is meant for all of us. . . . We carry the homeland in our hearts. In the final instance, all earth travellers are *émigrés*.

**Translator's Note*: This is a reference to Hölderlin's 'Hyperions Schicksalslied', the opening of which (in the translation by Michael Hamburger) is: 'But we are fated/To find no foothold, no rest . . .'.

Who, then, can be surprised at the failure of the German intelligentsia when a robust power shattered its fragile preserve and demanded of it an attitude for which it was as unprepared as it was incapable?

After Spranger the next visiting professor in Japan was the jurist Koellreutter. He was a Party member, and my Japanese colleagues wisely did not arrange for me to meet him. I only attended his lecture, which was so trivial that even the Japanese did not withhold their criticism. He illustrated the unity of the *Volk* and the leadership by means of a diagram in which he drew a vertical line (= the Party) from the apex of the *Führer* down to the broad level of the *Volk*.

By chance I also heard that the lecturer Rolf D. from Kiel was in Japan on the Ministry's behalf to study Japanese nationalist education. This intelligent and adroit man had been in my regiment during the war; and this was how I knew him. I wanted to talk to him, and regretted not having met him in Karuizawa. I therefore sent him a letter to ask whether we could perhaps meet in Tokyo. He sent me a cordial reply, but declared that he would shortly be returning, and could not spare the time. So I sent him another letter in which I presented my questions concerning German actions against my appointment in Sendai, and requested that he should do me the favour of answering them, perhaps from onboard ship. However, no reply ever reached me.

## *German Emigrants in Japan*

Almost all the German Jews and emigrants lived in Tokyo; therefore I made the acquaintance only of those who spent the summer in Karuizawa. Some of them had been acting as representatives of German businesses in Japan for decades. They had now lost their professional status and social position; nobody from the German colony socialized with them, even those among them who had spent years together in prisoner-of-war camps.

Well-known musicians like Leonid Kreutzer and Rosenstock were now employed as teachers at Japanese academies of music, and as conductors – much to the annoyance of the co-ordinated colony.

Another was working as a doctor. He told me that at one time a Party member came to his doctor's surgery with the excuse that he was not a 'real' Nazi, but a 'decent' German. On the other hand, those German women who went to his surgery were watched by other respectable German ladies from the Party, denounced, and then subjected to embarrassing interrogations.

The last few emigrants to arrive in Japan after November 1938 came to wait here until they received clearance to emigrate to America. Among them I became acquainted with the well-known political economist Franz Oppenheimer and his half-Aryan daughter, and two mixed-marriage couples. This is how I came to hear, for the first time, more detailed reports about the November days and about the latest anti-Semitic measures, which only fully confirmed the foreign 'horror stories'. These people – who, almost to a person, had spent weeks being detained in concentration camps – were not only forced to emigrate and leave all their property behind, but were first made to pay the full value of every item of underwear and clothing they wanted to take with them. Even personal jewellery was taken away from them; they had to prove before their departure that they had sold it and paid the net proceeds received for it into their closed account. The seventy-five-year old Oppenheimer bristled with an Old Testament hatred, since 'revenge had to be meted out', and he hoped to survive to see the annihilation of the enemy. Most of them bore their fate with composure and grief, and those who had gainful employment tried to forget what they had experienced in so far as that was possible, so long as they did not have relatives in Germany whose flight they had to take care of.

A special case was the jurist, philosopher and socialist St., who had been a university teacher in Lausanne, Berlin and Tokyo. Obstinacy, political intrigues and womanizing led to his dismissal from every one of these posts. Gradually he had gone completely downhill in the East, he had even lost his son in Japan, and vegetated in indescribably dilapidated conditions among manuscripts, books and remnants of food. Late in the afternoon he would regularly come down to the village from his remote wooden shack to do his shopping, wearing tall rubber boots and carrying his Japanese oil-paper umbrella plus walking stick and a bag on his

arm. His powerful skull was imposing, his eyes sometimes wore a drunken expression but also a kindly mischievous one, and a sybaritic smile would play around his soft toothless mouth. He was not easy to get along with because he immediately reacted ultra-sensitively and lived in a realm of ideas whose time had passed a hundred years ago, although he believed them to be highly modern and progressive.

His only friend – an Aryan, moreover – was an amiable Viennese who had already come to teach in Japan before the war, and found support in him to compensate for his low level of education. Although he was not an emigrant, he seemed to be more like one in his way of thinking than many an emigrant Jew. He passionately read all anti-Nazi papers, and Nazism as a whole was an absolute horror to him. When I first met him in a skiing hotel during the days when the German troops marched into Austria, he read in desperation a novel by Franz Werfel which had been banned in Germany. Besides him there were only two other German teachers in the whole of Tokyo who were not members of the National Socialist teachers' association: a witty Saxon and the sixty-year old Dr P., who had fallen out with the Embassy and all the Nazis.

## *National Socialism in Karuizawa*

It was impossible to escape from the swastika even in the Orient. The German colony, like all foreigners, spent the summer in the high-lying and healthier Karuizawa, where they lived in very close proximity to each other in the 'Forest of the Huns'. Each year in August, a conference of the National Socialist teachers' association would take place under the chairmanship of Dr D., secretary of the German-Japanese Cultural Institute. By chance I happened to know two of the participating teachers from Marburg: Herr K., who had been a student of the philosopher Hartmann; and Herr S., who had studied under Heidegger and Friedländer as a delicate youth, and in the meantime had turned into a fat, bloated man, which made it difficult for me to recognize him. They had all originally found their world-view and leadership in anthroposophy until they converted from Rudolf Steiner to Adolf Hitler and

hushed up their past. At first Herr K. pretended not to remember me, and Herr S. was embarrassed and immediately made his excuses that he was too busy and would therefore be unable to visit me for the time being.

Both were actively working for the Party, but Dr D., Japan's 'Custodian of Culture', was the really dangerous man. He spoke Japanese well and could even read it, and for that reason he was doubly influential. He had tried to block my appointment as early as 1936, and was now endeavouring to prevent the renewal of my contract. He did not succeed in this, however, because the ending of my first contract coincided with the time of the changing Japanese mood as a result of the German pact with Russia. In appearance Herr D. was a puny man whom one would imagine to be anything but a German (in the Nazi sense). Rather, he was the typical assistant at German university seminars: obsequious and pushy, subservient and petty-bourgeois. His careworn face was dominated by a sharply protruding nose, and his ugly mouth and weak chin matched his drooping shoulders well. When he raised his arm to say '*Heil Hitler*', with a voice that was worn with all the talking and smoking, he cut quite a pathetic figure. But he was an extremely zealous organizer, and his energy in the pursuit of propagandist aims was considerable. He was ceaselessly active, and overexerted himself in serving the new German culture and his own advancement.

I attended the public lectures in Karuizawa, in which the Japanese nationalists Fujisawa and Kanokogi spoke besides D. Confucius was compared with Hitler and vice versa, and they extended their Axis hands to bridge all the divides of race and culture. Only once did it get too much for the Germans. When Fujisawa compared Japan's relationship with China to that between Germany and Austria, and regretted only that the 'annexation' of China was a little more difficult, Herr D. ridiculed him by commenting that at least the Austrians were ethnic Germans. Fujisawa then amended his thesis to the point that China should 'show allegiance' under Japan's leadership. Both of these Japanese men – very well-known representatives of Pan-Asiatic politics – freely referred to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, to Alfred Rosenberg and Ernst Krieck. The world was to be healed by the Japanese, just as Europe would be by the Germans.

The only difference was that with the Japanese one could never tell how far their solidarity with Germany really extended, in contrast to which the Germans, as ever, posed as the superior schoolmasters who had to explain their mission to the Japanese. The German side openly expressed their doubts about the outcome of the war with China, while the Japanese bowed to Germany's strength and ended their lectures with '*Heil Hitler*'. Herr D.'s retrenchment was, however, no less characteristic than the German tutelage: 'It is not *I* who believes in (or doubts) Japan's world-historical mission, rather, it is the *Führer* who has made this decision, and we follow' – that is, heroic and groaning under the burden of responsibility in taking on the 'fate' that would, they hoped, be merciful to Japan and Germany. Beyond that there was much talk about blood, heritage, ancestors, liberalism and world-view.

Herr D. had also written a book, *Das Heldische in der japanischen Literatur* (The Heroic in Japanese Literature). In summer 1938 he organized a trip across Japan for a group of thirty fellows from the Hitler Youth to demonstrate the German essence to the Japanese. Dr P. very rightly remarked to me when they marched by in Karuizawa that this was a 'salvation army', and that there was no better-tested method of driving all thoughts out of the mind than ceaseless marching and singing. These clean boys had their thoughts supplied by Herr D. and his subordinate teachers during interminable academic lectures. Even the ambassador once gave them guidance on the political situation with his prediction that Chiang Kai-shek would be finished with the imminent fall of Hankau. On one occasion I passed the lecture room, and all I heard was: 'comradeship', 'honour', 'loyalty', 'discipline' and 'war experience'.

## *My Social Contact with Germans in Japan*

The few Germans who still dared to associate with me were two Protestant missionaries, Hg. and Hl., and Dr P., who was excluded from the German colony, Frau R., Dr B., Dr Sch. and the half-Japanese U., whose wife was German.

I was introduced to Hg. by the Japanese Christian Sakaeda. He had studied theology under Heim in Tübingen and under Brunner

in Zurich, and he had therefore read some of my essays which were published in the *Theologische Rundschau*. He was a tall and handsome youth, but with curiously rough hands, and his mannners were all too confident. He struck me as not being at all equal to the fulfilment of his Christian duty. He zealously threw himself into the foreign situation, learnt a substantial amount of Japanese within a short time, and was able to accomplish everything with great ease. How far he acted 'as a Christian' and 'as a German' depended on the occasion. He had joined the SS in the early days of the Nazi takeover, but then preferred to complete his studies in Switzerland. I had lent him a book by Rauschning that had been strictly banned in Germany. When he returned it to me, he admitted quite freely that he was absolutely captivated by it – indeed he even thought that a Party member like K. might possibly be most enthusiastic about it, but he would rather not draw his attention to it, since this would exceed his '*Zivilcourage*'. I have already mentioned elsewhere where Hg. stood on the Jewish question.

Hl. had a completely different character. He stood on his own two feet, and had built an uncompromising existence for himself. He adhered to the Confessing Church, and had lost his position as a Minister of his German parish as a result. He was even deprived of his teaching post at the Japanese high school at the instigation of the German Embassy. He was in constant conflict with the German authorities, and his sermons shunned neither an attack on the totalitarian state nor an attack on the Japanese Empire. He was untiring in his efforts to woo the Japanese to join his small parish, but besides that it naturally consisted only of a few German 'Jews and atheists'. In a public declaration at the outbreak of the war he refused any kind of collaboration with Hitler's government, which he called anti-Christian. When I held up Hl.'s resolution to Hg., he retorted that in his view it was not up to him to decide whether Hitler's government was anti-Christian or not, and that at any rate it was very difficult to draw a dividing line between being a Christian and being a German. While he did think highly of Hl. as a person, he felt that the latter was unfortunately lacking in common sense. It was precisely because he lacked it that Hl. was more of a German than all Party members put together, who denounced him to the Japanese authorities. He was the archetypal

young Lutheran minister, a protesting Protestant and an active student of Karl Barth.

Dr P., a Catholic by birth, was also a protestor. His blue eyes lit up whenever he had an opportunity to express his contempt for the barbarism that now called itself Germany. As a young man he had been the Paris correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* at a time when one was not dictated what to report by the Embassy. Later he went to China and finally to Japan, where he converted to Buddhism and studied the sects as well as working as a German teacher at a high schoool. He was an educated man, passionate and attentive. The German situation has in many ways led me to feel closer to the older generation, like P. and Curtius, than to my contemporaries in Germany.

Among the many cottages of Karuizawa, which were inhabited only during the summer, a grand and solid villa stood out, which made one suspect that it belonged to Germans alone because of its high and pointed gable. It was called 'Sunshine House', and was owned by the childless married couple R. They had lived in Japan for some decades already, and had founded the German school in Yokohama. Her husband was still headmaster of the school and, as such, was connected with the Party. His wife had set up on her own in Karuizawa, and was the only foreigner to keep her house open all the year round in defiance of all problems. Her guests were mainly German, and consequently members of National Socialist organizations, while she personally abhorred the intolerance and slogans of the Party circles, not least because of the fate of an emigrant brother. Her good-natured but weak husband had adopted the habit of complaining about his burdens and annoyances at school, although he, like most old residents in Japan, actually led an extremely comfortable life, as expatriate teachers' salaries by far exceeded those in Germany. His political views did not deviate from the norm. His wife took charge of managing the spacious house, whose furnishings and fare corresponded to German customs in every way, with North German energy. She treated her Japanese servants and the local authorities in the worst possible way, because she did not have the least inclination to understand and adapt to foreign customs and Japanese psychology. Germans always use their own methods of training, in stark contrast to the

much more pragmatic Americans, who adapt to the foreign situation as far as possible, but without giving up their own lifestyle. In this way they avoid obstinate differences and frictions. But despite of her domineering nature and severity, Frau B. was basically a gentle and sensitive person. In this her heart resembled her body, whose massive bulk was supported by slim and frail legs.

We wanted to recuperate in the R.s' house after a number of wretched domestic inconveniences (one night over Christmas our maid had suddenly disappeared for good), and asked them whether this would be possible. There would have been absolutely no question about it under normal circumstances, but the registration of a German at a German bed-and-breakfast hotel had become a tricky problem due to the policy of racial segregation and the ensuing complications both for Frau R. and for us. To avoid our meeting the German New Year guests, she asked us to come at a slightly later date – she herself regretted all this from the bottom of her heart. The wife of the German consul was the only guest still staying there. She was informed of our coming, and did not hesitate to meet us. The senior Consulate and Embassy officials were generally less orthodox than the Party upstarts.

During these two weeks we enjoyed the warm and comfortable house, the winter sun and the daily walks on the magnificent Asama mountain. We gained a friend in Frau R., who made us feel, in the course of a single day, that an undistorted natural humanity makes the apparently fixed dogma in Germany look absurd: the difference between 'foreigners' and 'members of the *Volk*', of race, blood and soil. The whole folly of such regulations was made clear to us only on such rare occasions as our stay with Frau R.

During the first summer, which we spent at the seaside resort of Takayama, I made the acquaintance of a Dr B. who, although he was a hundred per cent German, lacked any Party conscience. He had been a German language teacher at a high school for about fifteen years. With an earthiness and openness that seemed almost suspicious, he informed me about the authoritative people at the German Foreign Office. He hated the whole business, and had gone to Takayama only to escape from the conference of the National Socialist teachers' association. He was full of scorn for people who did not understand how to live freely and independently even 'in

this wilderness' (by which he meant Japan). He frequently visited us, did not mince his words, and gave way to his choleric disposition. He had studied Sanskrit and had looked forward to his habilitation as an Orientalist, but lost his savings after the war and, additionally, found himself in a politically dangerous situation, since he had been a member of the Rhineland separatists who wanted to gain independence from the *Reich*. When things got too hot for him, he accepted the offer of a job in Japan. Since then he has lived here as an independent and cunning man who judges people by their usefulness or harmfulness, in order to ensure the security of his job and the future of his family. He had managed to get one of his sons a job as an apprentice in a Tokyo firm, a second son was still studying in Germany, while the daughter lived with her parents. Just in case there was a chance of 'resettling' in Germany, he endeavoured to secure himself a good little post; hence he valued an understanding with D., who had the authority in such matters. At the same time he reported to me what he could learn from D. himself about his machinations against my position.

In summer 1939, Herr B. returned to Karuizawa to 'keep in with' the gentlemen. He never had the slightest scruple about denouncing a colleague who made life awkward for him if he thought it appropriate. In any case, mutual surveillance and denunciation were the order of the day in the German colony. When I asked him how he managed to be on such excellent terms with Herr D. he said, with his characteristic gesture, that money is thicker than blood. He had once helped him out with a considerable sum, and Herr D. therefore had every reason not to forget it. Conversely, he procured from him radio lectures on the National Socialist world-view, to which he was completely indifferent, but '50 Yen for twenty minutes of drivel' was not to be sneered at. In short, he treated his people exactly as they deserved, and I cannot deny that I always liked Herr B. whenever I saw him – not only because of his personal goodwill and a number of useful tips, but also because his cynicism and cunning had decided style. At the outbreak of the war against Poland, when Germans in Karuizawa waited to hear from the Embassy what they should think about it, I met him in the street, and he shouted to me in his resounding voice: 'Well, I am dumbfounded; this time England will make *tabula rasa* with Adolf,

and his Germans are once again harbouring a great illusion.' *He* was not going to hold out his head a second time. It was quite sufficient for him that this time it might be his sons' turn.

The other Germans, of course, universally believed that all would be over in a fortnight because England would not dare to go to war. They gathered in front of the news-window of the Japanese-American newspaper with embarrassed faces, and they were still busy knitting their brows when they were taken by surprise by the news of the pact with Russia that Rauschning had so precisely predicted as much as two years earlier. The gentlemen Fujisawa and Kanokogi, as well as many other Japanese, initially saw all their hopes dashed, and thousands of pamphlets and books on the 'world-historical mission' of Japan and Germany against Bolshevism were turned into waste paper. 'How all the faces change with altered situations! Although a few are adept at making the best of the new situation, it none the less leaves a sour taste in their mouths, and there are people standing beside them, watching' (J. Burckhardt to F. von Preen, 1871).

Dr Sch.'s nervousness provided a sharp contrast to B.'s robustness. He embodied carefulness and restraint. He too had arrived in Japan long before the Nazi takeover, having studied under Cassirer and Rickert. Until 1933 everything went fine, but then suddenly there was an end to that because his wife was of Jewish extraction. I had been recommended to her by her uncle, the psychiatrist and psychologist B. It turned out that we had a further mutual acquaintance in Dr St., who had been Sch.'s student friend and was now in England, unable to find a job. In his first letter, which referred to giving shelter to our mutual friend, Sch. immediately drew my attention to the fact that he was a member of the National Socialist teachers' association, and therefore not Jewish, and hence would be unable to do anything for St. directly. In order to maintain their precarious situation, he and his wife were compelled to hush up the truth in so far as that was possible. Their precautionary measures went so far as even his wife avoiding meetings with Jewish acquaintances in public lest it damaged the position of her husband and children. The latter were attending the German school, and had to forget in the Hitler Youth that their mother was not Aryan. They did not spend the summer in Karuizawa, in order to avoid the

German Party people, but instead at Lake Nojiri, from where he would go to the teachers' conference. He was a cultivated man without illusions who did not overexert himself, and therefore maintained his equilibrium. But in his wife's face it was easy to detect the bitter cruelty caused by the constant reaction to an artificial situation.

The U.s found themselves in a no less difficult situation. He had a German father and a Japanese mother, while his wife was German and her child had mixed-race features. They were friendly, good-natured and assimilated people, but they unceasingly listened and gossiped. They were able to get on equally well with those who had been co-ordinated and those who had been excluded, because they did not know where they themselves belonged. Hence they were conciliatory to both sides, and prone to flattery. As a person of mixed race, U. had no chance to practise his profession in Germany; he was a botanist specializing in potato cultivation. He therefore became a German language teacher at a Japanese school, in return for which he first had to learn Japanese, despite his Japanese looks. The tragicomedy of this couple was their embodiment of the German–Japanese friendship, and precisely because of it they were sitting between two stools – between the Japanese and Germans, neither of whom took them seriously.

## *German Events between 1936 and 1939*

In winter 1937–8, my mother was staying with her brothers and sisters in Vienna, where she enjoyed a remnant of homeland and freedom for the last time. She herself had been born in Vienna. Nobody at that time thought it possible that Austria could be annexed by Germany without Italy's resistance. Without doubt there was unrest, but in general Schuschnigg's government seemed to be able to hold its own, and those who wanted annexation were clearly not in the majority. The fate of an Austrian fellow ex-serviceman, who was in Finalmarina with me, illustrates the situation. He had been head teacher at a school in Melk and, as a civil servant and former officer, he naturally sided with his government, whose authoritarian but moderate line he saw as salutary and right.

The day after the German troops marched in, he was dismissed on the basis of a denunciation. In order to support himself and his large family, he had to hand in a petition for re-employment in the school service. After some months he had his request granted, owing to his war injury, in the form of a relegation to a small country school. His final letters contained intimations that were difficult to decode, and since then I have never heard from him again.

My mother's three brothers were forced to sell their factory, which had been in the family for generations. Fortunately, some were able to emigrate to join their sons in America by forfeiting their possessions. One of my mother's sisters, who was married to an Aryan *Reich* German in Linz, had to divorce herself from him and leave her daughter behind. She moved to Vienna, where she is still waiting to see what will become of her. A seventy-year-old brother was given shelter by friends in Switzerland, while his Aryan wife stayed in Vienna. The ruin of these numerous branches of the family, which in the course of three generations had worked their way up to prosperity and education, is complete, and requires no elaboration. One of the expellees, who is now in New York, sent me a letter which expressed the hope that he would live to see the day when England and France would dictate peace terms to Germany. Those who had experienced all that had happened in Vienna could not have the least understanding for the impudence with which the Germans were screaming bloody murder about the way the Poles were conducting the war. But it was all over now, even with the 'golden Viennese heart', because anyone who could do things like this was no longer to be trusted. He never wanted to return to Vienna, even if he was once again permitted to go for a walk in the Prater. It was quite enough that it had taken him a year to get over his experience.

No less radical than the annihilation of Jews was the extirpation of what had constituted Austria's amiability and the charm of its people, and was now annexed as 'Greater Germany'. They deliberately called it a 'union' – as if a country would unite with another by invading it, putting it under military occupation and then recklessly exploiting it. With the rape of Austria I have lost my homeland a second time, and the idea that at least there we might in the future be able to feel at home again has now gone for ever. Even the

distribution of my books is now entirely restricted to Switzerland; hence it has become completely meaningless to write in my mother tongue, considering that my German readership is inevitably lost.

Vienna was followed by Brno, and Brno by Prague, and that at last provoked an about-turn in England's policy of appeasement. Both events intensified the persecution of the Jews and led to Italy's adoption of the race laws, which were probably primarily intended to stem the tide of refugees heading for Italy.

In December 1938 I received a demand from the German Consulate General to send in my passport. It was stamped with a red 'J' on the first page to inform all authorities immediately that the owner of this German passport was not a German but a Jew. Furthermore, I was compelled to declare that I had assumed Israel as my last name, which was also recorded in my passport. Only names like Abieser, Abimelech, Ahasja, and so on, were admissible – names that no one had or knew – whereas all the well-known biblical names that are also in Christian use were not permitted, all the more to emphasize the Jew's status as an alien. Most of the Germans probably saw nothing more than a political regulation in these two measures – if they took notice of them at all. And why, indeed, should a Jew not be described as such in the passport too? After all, the times in which Jews changed their names and engaged in mimicry were over.

Only those suffering from and intentionally offended by these measures to the depth of their being and essence were able to gauge the brutality and baseness of this new regulation that forced a name on us by which we had never been known, and provided us with a stamp that means in German: '*Ecce homo*! Be careful, he is not one of us but belongs to human garbage, and you can do what you like with him!' And even if my '*Judenpass*' is likely to be more useful than damaging in the present war situation, my reaction to it was and remains the same: to get rid of that German passport and, with it, not my Jewish background and my real name, but the German citizenship with which I no longer have anything to do.

When the war broke out in September 1939 – or rather, when the German 'methods' exceeded the tolerance level of even English patience – the involuntary thought had to cross my mind that after a number of years a return to Germany might be possible. I had

already given myself the answer to this question through Burckhardt in 1935. This true authority on world history, who had dedicated his *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* to an Italian *émigré*, thought it desirable

> that emigrants never return, or at least not with claims for compensation, that they accept their suffering as part of their destiny on earth, and honour the statute of limitations, which will make its judgements not after mere years but according to the depth of the schism. For the new generation of which one demands that it should look inward on itself just will not do it; rather, it will plot a new revolution.

## *Two Aryan Emigrants*

Under the circumstances, it consoled me to know two Aryan Germans who had also left Germany in 1938 without being compelled to do so, Dr K. and O.-K. The latter had supported my book on Nietzsche as an editor for the Runde publishing house. He originally intended to habilitate in Germany. He observed German developments for some years before he was quite convinced that a tolerable human existence in the Third Reich was not feasible. He went to Zurich, where he succeeded in habilitating at its university. Since he often had the opportunity to write letters from Italy or Switzerland, his communications were unencumbered by the restrictions that rendered all letters from Germany boring.

In February 1937 he wrote:

> Germany today is in such a state that it is utterly impossible to live there – no matter how you set about it, what you think, and how you feel. Naturally one senses this particularly strongly on occasions like the last *Führer* speech. It was a sum total of exaggerated lies (we were all 'forced labour' until January 1933 – perhaps you still remember that!), of boundless self-overestimation and simultaneously an underestimation of all others. Moreover, there is this loathsome and insincere concealment of all true causes by shifting them on to neutral ground, or counteracting them in phantasmagoria

with a bloody end. It is utterly unbearable. And the oddest thing is that today you can quite clearly sense that a large section of the population knows it, even though people do not translate it into action, as if they were too lazy to do so, too exhausted, too weak. This dawned on me when I recently leafed through the *Berliner Illustrierte*. It contained a photo-reportage: 'The face of the German listening to the *Führer's* speech'. Over the last few years I have never seen such a catastrophic document of today's conditions in Germany. It featured several photographs from workshops, restaurants, cinemas, assembly halls, etc. And in all the faces there was the same depressing expression of complete apathy and letting go, of a complete lack of energy at least to admit to themselves the insights they have gained or just darkly felt, if not actually tell the whole world about them. It was really frustrating and shocking to see these photographs.

I was sitting in a large restaurant during Hitler's speech. When I began to get bored with it, I observed the faces of the people sitting near me. As the speech got steadily more frantic, I suddenly noticed a pleasant-looking young man sitting opposite me go red in the face, then pale, and finally become restless. He got up suddenly and, in a stentorian voice, called to the waiter demanding the bill. This action had the oddest impact: other people suddenly got up from several tables, I myself was caught up in the wave of departure, and – as one tends to say today – we left the restaurant 'in closed rank' to seek a little place somewhere outside where one was not exposed to the speech. This was a venture that had its problems because, after all, a loudspeaker was maliciously lurking on passers-by at every corner. It produced a completely unintended but none the less comical effect – at one corner one heard a sentence, then for a while nothing, at another corner another sentence, and so on, and in spite of it the whole speech sounded quite coherent. Besides, it seems to be the same thing all the time. In any case, this speech, which I have tasted down to its last subtleties, had the effect that I am now very happy not to have to hear any more for the present.

In June 1937 he sent me the following description of the mood:

> It is uncanny to what extent Germany has changed. If one has lived outside it for a while, one feels like a provincial or a German expatriate who has not been home for years. Moreover, it is so exhausting that it took me a week to feel reasonably restored to health. The state of universal marasmus has increased even further, and in such a way that one asks oneself how it is possible for people to live like that. The oppression, the apathy, the resignation – all these have become so commonplace that one thinks one is bound to suffocate. In addition, there is a general softening that has gradually developed into a universal character trait through the constant compulsion to seek compromises. Ultimately compromises are being sought where they would not be in the least necessary, and this leads to a state of lazy mendacity that takes hold of even the best if they do not have the courage to isolate themselves. Besides, it is even impossible to make a moral judgement of this state of affairs because real mendacity also demands positive action, but none of that can be felt as a rule. It is simply a general letting oneself go, sinning by omission of the good. Berlin now reminds me of Vienna, where the people became sluggish after the war and capitulated in the face of economic hardship, just as the people in Berlin now do in the face of the political state of emergency. While one does what one economically can to secure a reasonably pleasant life, one ignores all moral aspects of life. One keeps drinking coffee and playing the Tarot; and one keeps whining about politics, which I find desperately superficial. Anyway, all of history continues to go round in circles.[24]

In 1939 this German resolved to draw the most obvious conclusion that if it came to the worst he would, if need be, fight against Germany on the side of Switzerland, to which he owed a debt of gratitude. He gained the conviction that German events were not merely the specifically monstrous product of National Socialism, but simply typical of the German and possible only in Germany.

I had already become friendly with O. during my first stay in Italy. At the time of the Nazi takeover, he was a music critic for a

Berlin newspaper. After some years in this work, he retired from journalism in order to concentrate fully on his work as a composer. From a newspaper report I learned that he now held a prominent position among the younger German musicians as a composer. His long-standing restraint had borne fruit, and matured his quiet talent. I was very pleased, and after many years of silence I sent a letter to him, which I addressed to the newspaper's editorial office. To my surprise the reply came not from Berlin but from Switzerland. He wrote:

> Your cordial lines have given me much pleasure. They reached me here, where I was already in voluntary exile when my 'fame' in Berlin took on the visible forms that you have come to notice. I left last December. The November days of 1938 gave me the final inner resolve, and I took the step that had thus far been prevented by the presence of my Jewish friends. Once they had left, it was no longer my duty to stay there. . . . Who would have thought of an imminent new population migration so soon after we had peacefully and romantically roamed through the olive groves of Settignano, where you told me of your idyllic observations at the canonry? It is horrible to think of what has become of the world. My thoughts to friends now have to roam the whole world.

O. was wrong on only one count: the peacefulness of our Tuscan life was a mere illusion, and the population migration had already begun in 1914.

World history is mirrored in a small notebook every day: it is the small red address book that I have been carrying with me since Marburg. Hardly one address has remained the same. Close friends and distant acquaintances are dispersed throughout the world, and the loss of the greater part of the earlier correspondents has been made up by recently added names from my exile. Only letters from my wife's closest family members now come from Germany, while the remainder of our correspondents now write from England and America, from Turkey and Palestine, from Switzerland and Holland, Colombia, Australia and New Zealand – to Japan.

## *How the Separation between Germans and Jews Began for Me*

The time 'after Hitler' began for me as early as my Freiburg student days. For me the radical change took the shape of a minor incident that was not discernible to the public, and actually consisted only of a 'no'. I repressed it in the years that followed, because it hit me where it hurt most.

I had not seen my best friend of the prewar period since 1914. He had married after the war, and was not in Munich when I left for Freiburg. When I returned to Munich during the university vacations in 1920, I wanted to visit him. I rang the doorbell of the guest-house where he lived, and sent in my name. After I had been kept waiting for a remarkably long period, his wife appeared at the door to tell me that L. was very sorry that he was unable to see me. Did I not know that he was 'with Hitler'? I did not say anything, descended the stairs, and have never seen him again since. An old teacher, who was warmly attached to both of us, repeatedly tried to reunite us, but all such attempts foundered on L.'s resolve. He was passionately active on behalf of the Party, and had given up painting.

For me, National Socialism began at this moment, and with it the separation between Germans and Jews.

## *Being a German and a Jew Simultaneously*

A German Jew whose work on Hegel is well-known, while his real work was intended for the Jewry,[25] was questioned about his position on Jewishness and Germanness when he was interviewed for a post at a Jewish school:

> I retorted that I would refuse to answer this question. If life were at one stage to torment me and tear me into two pieces, then I would naturally know with which of the two halves the heart – which is, after all, asymmetrically positioned – would side. I would also know that I would not be able to survive this operation. However, these gentlemen wanted me alive after all; therefore, I had to ask them not to

> torment me with this truly life-threatening question, but to leave me whole.

At the same time Franz Rosenzweig knew quite well 'that the liberal German-Jewish standpoint on which nearly all of German Jewry had a place for close to a hundred years' has become so isolated today (the letter is dated 1923) 'that only *one* human being, namely myself, can still live on it: Poor Hermann Cohen!'[26] Rosenzweig knew another thing that the Germans, and even Mr Belloc, neither knew nor wanted to realize – that the 'and' between being a German and a Jew was a question of tact:

> There can hardly be general rules about this. Where in the life of the individual the emphasis should be placed, and moreover whether it should be one emphasis rather than two, and how the masses would be distributed between these emphases – these are all things on which all individuals have to make a decision for and within themselves. But they must be *able* to decide. One has to give them the capacity for that. I would never again dare to regiment life. This would, after all, contradict the unwritten nature of the 'and', which to me . . . is absolutely essential for faith.[27]

## *The German Simplification and German Protest*

Even the additional question of what will be *after* Hitler cannot remove or resolve this problem, since it has always been so essentially a part of Jewish existence (the history of the Jewish people actually *begins* with its exile, not with the autochthony of all the other peoples of the world), just as it is characteristic of the National Socialist 'solution' that it simply does not acknowledge the 'and'. With this simplification one arrives at those 'linear cast-iron concepts' of which Dostoevsky spoke in his comments on simplicity and simplification.[28]

The war and its consequences have had the greatest impact on this simplification of thought and action too, in that most of the problems are simply ignored. Yet a very complex problem is concealed behind the simplicity of the new German mode of thinking,

because it is nothing more than insecurity that has given the Germans their political and racial self-confidence after Hitler. They have never been sure of themselves, nor do they know who they are. They constantly need an enemy, or at least a scapegoat, in order to gain self-determination. Because of this, the 'Aryan' is pure fiction provided that he is not anti-Semitic. Barbarian Germany within the civilized world is just as much a stranger and outside the law as the Jews within the Third Reich.

The objection of well-meaning foreigners that Hitler is not Germany is both right and wrong – the former if one evaluates what is German by Hitler's own claim to embody the German *Volk*; and the latter because this *Volk* does not consist of Chinese but has chosen a *Führer* of its own accord, and submits for the present to a leadership that would not be tolerated if its kings, chancellors, emperors and leaders from Frederick the Great to Hitler, had been in serious conflict with its character. 'The Germanic character in the history of Europe'[29] has always been the same protest.

In 1877 Dostoevsky wrote about the Germanic world problem:

> Germany's aim is one; it existed before, always. It is her Protestantism – not that single formula of Protestantism which was conceived in Luther's time, but her continual Protestantism, her *continual protest* against the Roman world, ever since Arminius – against everything that was Rome and Roman in aim, and subsequently – against everything that was bequeathed by ancient Rome to the new Rome, and to all those peoples who inherited from Rome her idea, her formula and element; against the heir of Rome and everything that constitutes this legacy. . . . Ancient Rome was the first to generate the idea of the universal unity of men, and was the first to start thinking of (and firmly believing in) putting it practically into effect in the form of a universal empire. However, this formula fell before Christianity – the formula, but not the idea. For this idea is that of European mankind; through this idea its civilization came into being; for it alone mankind lives. Only the idea of the universal *Roman* empire succumbed, and it was replaced by a new ideal, also universal, of a communion in Christ. . . . Since that time, in the Roman world this scheme has been progressing and changing uninterruptedly,

and with its progress, the most essential part of the Christian element has been virtually lost. Finally, having rejected Christianity spiritually, the heirs of the ancient Roman world would likewise renounce papacy. The dreadful French Revolution has thundered. In substance, it was but the last modification and metamorphosis of the same ancient Roman formula of universal unity. The new formula, however, proved insufficient. The new idea failed to come true. There was even a moment when all the nations which had inherited the ancient Roman tradition were almost in despair. Oh, of course, that portion of society which in 1789 won political leadership – i.e. the bourgeoisie – triumphed, and declared that there was no necessity of going any further. But all those minds which, by virtue of the eternal laws of nature, are destined to dwell in a state of everlasting universal fermentation, seeking the new formula of some ideal . . . they all rushed to the humiliated and defrauded, to all those who had not received their share in the new formula of universal unity proclaimed by the French Revolution of 1789. These proclaimed a new word of their own – namely, the necessity of universal fellowship not for the equal distribution of rights allotted to a quarter or so of the human race, leaving the rest to serve as raw material and a means of exploitation for the happiness of that quarter of mankind, but on the contrary – for the necessity of universal equality, with each and everyone sharing the blessings of this world, whatever these may prove. It was decided to put this scheme into effect by resorting to all means, i.e. by the means of Christian civilization – without stopping at anything. Now, what has been Germany's part in this, throughout these 2000 years? The most characteristic and essential trait of this great, proud and peculiar people – ever since their appearance on the historical horizon – consisted of the fact that they never consented to assimilate their destiny and their principles to those of the outermost Western world, i.e. the heirs of the ancient Roman tradition. The Germans have been protesting against the latter throughout these 2000 years. And even though they did not (never did so far) utter their "word", or set forth their strictly formulated idea in lieu of the ancient Roman idea, nevertheless, it seems that, within themselves, they always were convinced that

they were uttering this new 'word' of leading mankind. . . . Finally, the Germans protested most vehemently, deriving their formula of protest from the innermost spiritual, elemental foundation of the Germanic world: they proclaimed the freedom of enquiry, and they raised Luther's banner. This was a terrible universal break: the formula of protest had been found and filled with the content; even so, it was still a negative formula, and the new, positive word was not yet uttered.

And now the Germanic spirit, having uttered this 'new word' of protest, as it were, fainted for a while, quite parallel to an identical weakening of the former strictly formulated unity of the forces of his adversary. The outermost Western world, under the influence of the discovery of America, of new sciences and new principles, sought to reincarnate itself in a new truth, in a new phase. When, at the time of the French Revolution, the first attempt at such reincarnation took place, the Germanic spirit became quite perplexed, and for a time lost its identity and faith in itself. It proved impotent to say anything against the new ideas of the outermost Western world. Luther's Protestantism had long outlived its time, while the idea of free enquiry had long been accepted by universal science. Germany's enormous organism began to feel more than ever that it had no flesh, so to speak, and no form for self-expression.

It was then that the pressing urge to consolidate itself, at least outwardly, into a harmonious organism was born in Germany, in anticipation of the new future aspects of her eternal struggle against the outermost Western world. . . . And now, while this was transpiring in the enemy camp, Germany's genius grasped the fact that it was the German task, too – prior to any other business or undertaking, prior to any attempt at a 'new word' against the adversary who had reincarnated himself from the ancient Catholic idea – to complete her own political consolidation and the restoration of her political organism, and, only after completing that, to face her eternal enemy. Thus it came to pass: having completed her unification, Germany attacked her enemy, embarking upon a new phase of her struggle against her, which she began with blood and iron. The iron business is finished, and it has got to be completed spiritually, essentially. But, suddenly,

> Germany finds herself faced with a new concern, with a new, unexpected turn of events terribly complicating the task.[30]

World history has been wiser than Hitler: while he did not want to, he now has to fight against England (and England now represents the 'Roman' aim, if only in a very derived sense); and in addition to that, he has to make a pact with the second European opponent – with Russia, as Dostoevsky had foreseen as well. Germany is not the heart of Europe nor of Christianity, but the centre of its dissolution.

# *Epilogue*

In these records the political and social changes in Germany are portrayed above all in terms of the separation between Germanness and Jewishness. This restriction was necessary to fulfil the requirement that reports should deal only with one's own experience. Yet at the same time the German revolution affected me primarily as a Jew, and it would be foolish to think that an individual could perhaps somehow escape these universal events. My life is now indeed conditioned by the abandonment of emancipation in Germany, and from this arises the crisis on one salient point: that one is a German and a Jew precisely because the one was separated from the other in Germany. Even those who can find a new homeland and obtain citizenship rights in another country will take a large part of their lives to heal this breach, and indeed, even more so if they took their Germanness for granted and perceived themselves as Germans before Hitler. Although this is a fact, the history of one's own life cannot be concentrated on this *one* question. The *world* is too wide, and life is too rich to be compartmentalized into a 'before' and 'after' anything. Only *history* knows such turning points, but all histories survive beyond them, and the only thing that remains constant is that which knows neither a before nor an after, because it is always like this, as it has been and will be in the future.

# *Another Epilogue*

I have sometimes asked myself where I would now stand if I lived as a German with Germans. This question may be idle speculation in my case, but it has substance when one thinks of the friends who stayed behind in Germany. For even those who stand outside the Party are involved in German events as Germans, and I myself contributed to the destruction before our paths divided. This happened when Hitler came to power and positively wanted something that would put an end to the destruction which, however unintentionally, was caused by a confluence of the most varied sources. On the other hand, there was no simple return on the path of the critique of existing conditions, which had led so close to the revolution that this critique could have superseded the revolution. Only the irrecoverable fact of radical change forced me to revise the intellectual direction in which I had been progressing since my Freiburg student days without knowing where I was heading. For me, the touchstone was my own position on Nietzsche.

My last Marburg lecture on Nietzsche (1933–4) already contained all the essential ideas for my Prague Congress paper (1934), in which I contrasted Nietzsche's topicality with his doctrine of eternity. This presentation constituted the outline of my book *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkunft des Gleichen* (Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same, 1935). The foreword and concluding chapter (on 'centrality and moderation' as a yardstick of Nietzsche's self-criticism) led to the monograph of Burckhardt (1936), whose first chapter consists of an argument with Nietzsche on Burckhardt's part. And the final sentence of the Burckhardt book, in which Nietzsche himself expresses his resignation, had already been the motto for my Marburg inaugural lecture (1928) on Burckhardt, although I had maintained a tacit reservation about Nietzsche ever since my dissertation on him (1923) and throughout my ten-year study of his analysis of 'European Nihilism'.

Three years after the publication of the book on Burckhardt, I completed my work on the whole of German development 'from Hegel to Nietzsche' in Japan, which I had planned as early as my habilitation (with a lecture on Feuerbach). The last sentences of its epilogue finally indicate the result of the revision that historical events had forced me to undertake:

> But as far as the special history of the German spirit in the nineteenth century is concerned, it is the fatal consistency of philosophical development after Hegel that facilitates the taking of the successive steps, whose result is excess. And thus a historical insight into the intellectual events of the period may lead us to retrace the steps in reverse order: from Nietzsche's 'magic of the extreme' via Burckhardt's moderation to Goethe's moderate fullness, in order to acknowledge the German spirit in an undoubtedly great person.

But there is no return in time, neither to Goethe nor to anyone else. Time as such has given way to progress, and only at those moments in which eternity appears as the truth of being are we able to prove the temporal schema of progress and decline to be a historical illusion.

But the questions raised by Nietzsche and Germany have remained as such. They primarily relate to *Christianity* and the European *humanism* it engendered. But in so far as both remained a *problem* for me, which I wanted to resolve by neither a positive Christian nor an anti-Christian stance, the position I took on National Socialist Germany necessarily lacked that immediate decisiveness which provides a simple yes or no. B. rightly perceived this lack of clarity when he remonstrated with me that I had personally destroyed what I was now holding on to. This ambiguity cannot be simplified in theory. But it is transformed of its own accord into a decisive rejection of the seemingly conclusive having-done with Christianity and Christian humanitarianism – namely, at that crucial point where a whole people, including its 'poets and thinkers', practise Nietzsche's 'Will to Power', and where barbarity becomes manifest, which in Nietzsche himself still seemed acceptable through the spirit, and even 'Christianity'.

The impetus for my rejection of German methods came from the German treatment of the Jews. The fact that this concerned me personally does not in the least diminish its general significance for the recognition of the German 'uprising'. The German solution to the Jewish question is in principle only the most overt aspect of barbarity, which sanctions every brutality in the service of a monstrous state. Being confronted with this dehumanization of the human being, mere humanism is incapable of raising even one effective protest, and this offers an explanation for the spiritual reaction resorting to similarly drastic methods and preaching a return to the Church.

Quite a number of my friends have expected a radical solution from me, too, whether it be in the sense of a return to Jewishness, or a decision for Christianity, or even a political dogma. Instead, I realized that 'radical' solutions in particular are no solutions at all, merely blind obduracies that make a virtue of necessity and simplify life. Life and the coexistence of people and nations are not such that they are feasible without patience and forbearance, scepticism and resignation – that is to say, without the qualities that contemporary Germans disavow as unheroic because they absolutely lack any appreciation of the frailty of all human activities.

> Man born of woman is short-lived and full of disquiet. He blossoms like a flower and then withers; he slips away like a shadow and does not stay. (Job 14: 1–2, *New English Bible*)

Voltaire was still able to assert that these words contain everything that characterizes human existence – an insight that has been lost by the Germans.

# *Notes*

1 From one of Goebbels's election speeches:

> 'He who throws a dice for a prize also has to dare a wager, hence we have made Nietzsche's words come true: "Have the courage to live dangerously". Obviously major projects cannot be carried out as long as dozens of parties get under one's feet. These parties don't make history, they only make a fuss. Today *one* man speaks for the *Reich*, and his voice echoes the voices of 66 million people.'

2 In 1931–2 there was a total of 168 lecturers at Marburg University, of whom eight (that is, 5 per cent) were non-Aryan. The theological and medical faculties were 'clear of Jews' [*judenrein*], as the Germans called it; in the law faculty there was one Jew; in the philosophical faculty, which included the natural sciences, there were seven.

3 See A. Baeumler's critical review in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, 31 August 1933.

4 A. Grunsky, *Der Einbruch des Judentums in die Philosophie* (The Jewish Foray into Philosophy), 1937. But no less characteristic of 'instinctive certainty' is an article by the editor, O. Dietrich, also published in 1933 in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, in which Husserl's phenomenology is introduced as one of the philosophical bases of National Socialism.

5 The motto of Heidegger's unpublished critical comment on Jaspers's *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* was derived from Kierkegaard and went as follows: 'The time of the distinction is over'. This was supposed to indicate that psychological diversity no longer played a role, but only 'the one thing that matters'. This 1921 paper already outlines all the basic concepts of Heidegger's philosophy: 'destruction', 'existence' and 'facticity'.

6 Later on he naturally said: 'From Barth to Przywara' – all that was the same – namely, the same untenability – and so long as F. Overbeck was not refuted, Protestant theology would be up in the air.

7 On this, see the author's 'Politischer Dezisionismus', *Internationale Zeitschrift für die Theorie des Rechts* (135, H. 2); cf. below, p. 90.

8 The development of Carl Schmitt's political ideas underwent the same process; on this, see 'Politischer Dezisionismus', p. 112 ff.

9 It is only consistent that a prominent National Socialist like A. Baeumler even abstracts from 'The Will to Power' in his interpretation of Nietzsche, and speaks instead of the 'Will *as* Power', because each pre-set goal supposedly intellectualistically reduced the will. Thus the will is authentic only in so far as it is unaware of what it wants to achieve, but simply wants something.

10 Compare the Foreword of Marx's dissertation. Nietzsche, too, chose a Prometheus in shackles as the cover design of his first book.

11 Even in his lecture 'What is Metaphysics?' (1929) he states that: with the human *Dasein*, a disruption occurred in the whole of Being, and in such a way that this 'awakens' what it is. But the term 'awakening' was already in popular use by the youth movement before the war.

12 Compare the characterization of fascist activism in the epilogue of Benedetto Croce's *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (1932).

13 See Clemenceau's remark about the Germans' relationship with death:

> It is a characteristic of the human being to love life. Germans do not have this drive. In the heart of Germans, their conception of art, their world of ideas and their literature we find a lack of understanding of what really makes life meaningful, of its fascination and its greatness. In contrast, they are filled with a pathological and satanic longing for death. How these people love death! Trembling as in a fever

> of emotion, and with an ecstatic smile, they look up to it like a kind of divinity. Where do they get it from? I do not know. . . . Just read their poets: everywhere you will find death. Death on foot and death on horseback, death in all poses and in all kinds of garments. It dominates them, it is their *idée fixe*. . . . War, too, is a pact with death for them. (*Weitere Unterhaltungen Clemenceaus with J. Martet*, Berlin, 1930, pp. 54 ff.)

14 On this, see H. Rauschning, *Die Revolution des Nihilismus* (Zurich 1938, pp. 421 ff.)

15 This idea is also merely a political application of what Heidegger claims in *Sein und Zeit* (para. 26) to be the actual 'coexistence' (*Mit-dasein*) with others. His starting point is never a togetherness, but always the particularity of each (*Je-eigenheit*) individual or even nation. Compare Heidegger's conception of political 'communication' in an essay published in the *Freiburger Jahrbuch* (1938).

16 Compare the end of Carl Schmitt's lecture in 1929 on *Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierungen und Entpolitisierungen* (The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations):

> All new and great initiatives, each revolution and each reformation, each new elite, originates in asceticism and voluntary or involuntary poverty, whereby poverty primarily signifies a renunciation of the security of the status quo. Early Christianity and all major reforms within Christianity – the Benedictine, the Cluniac, the Franciscan renewal, Baptism and Puritanism – but also each authentic rebirth, with its return to a simple principle of its own kind, each genuine *ritornar al principio*, each return to pure, uncorrupted nature, appears as cultural and social nothingness compared to the comfort and enjoyment of the existing status quo. It grows quietly and in the dark, and in its first beginnings a historian or sociologist would again perceive no more than nothingness. The moment of glorious representation is also the moment at which that connection with the secret, insignificant beginning is at risk.

17 D. Sternberger, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* reviewer, described the final effect of Heidegger's lecture on the *Ursprung des Kunstwerks* (The Origin of the Work of Art) as follows:

> Nothing is avoided here so much as the tangible result. Therefore, even the last lecture ended with an obscure Hölderlin maxim, which was announced to the enthralled listeners as a word of salvation and an infallible criterion as to whether a time and the present time knew and wanted to know their 'origins', or whether they were satisfied with the derivatives of education and taste. The line he quoted was: 'It is hard for those who live close to their origins to leave the place.' And one could bet on it that all those in the audience who had previously thought they had understood the essential elements, and believed they had absorbed them, were looking a little disconcerted at seeing their newly held hopes dashed. . . . If any one of these philosophers wanted to deny him all the faculties of knowledge, then he would none the less have to admit this one thing: that he succeeds extremely well at playing a trick on the audience and depriving it unawares of the point of comprehension, which it was so certain of having a firm grasp upon, at the moment of the highest expectation. But without ever betraying this kind of ever-useful cunning in philosophical matters in either countenance or tone, the man at the lectern recited this sublime verse, gathered up his papers and left the podium.

18 Heyse's favourite terms are: 'decisive', 'fundamental', 'resolute', 'inexorable', 'radical', 'original' (both in a comparative and superlative sense), 'original causes', 'original problems', 'original values', 'original powers', 'original forces', 'original being', and particularly – if one counts the usages on p. 112 or pp. 294–300, for example – a plainly excessive misuse of 'deep', 'deeper', 'at the deepest level'.

19 In an analogous fashion, Heidegger also sat on the scientific committee of the Nietzsche archive together with a Nietzsche 'scholar' like R. Oehler – again probably to prevent 'much worse', while in reality he covers up the bad with his good

name. For the general characterization of the German attitude to facts and concepts, see Hegel's *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie* (Essays on Politics and the Philosophy of Law, ed. Lasson, 1913, p. 6):

> In eternal contradiction between what they demand and what runs counter to their demands, they not only appear censorious but, if they speak only of their concepts, untrue and dishonest, because they include the necessity in their concepts of law and duties. But nothing occurs in accordance with this necessity, and they themselves are so used to it that in part their words always contradict their deeds, and in part they seek to make something quite different of the occurrences from what they really are, and twist their explanation of them to accord with particular concepts. . . . It is precisely for the sake of their concepts that the Germans appear so dishonest; not to admit the way things really are, nor to present them as they more or less actually are.

20 Professor Einstein has accepted the chair of mathematics and physics offered to him at the Collège de France. . . . Prime Minister Daladier invited the Chamber to join the government in 'honouring not only his genius but also his courage'. After the 'courageous' Professor Einstein has accepted the red-carpet treatment on being turned into a French professor, it is essential that those professors in higher education who have been suspended have their foreign passports withdrawn forthwith. Failing that, nobody will be able to guarantee that the one or other of these gentlemen will not be sitting in Paris, Oxford or at the London School of Economics in the near future, pursuing anti-German politics from their foreign professorial platform. As soon as the dismissals have been put into effect, we also have to accept the obvious consequences in our foreign policy. At the same time we have to consider that several of the professors who have been suspended, such as Kelsen, Lederer and Bonn, have excellent international connections. (*Tägliche Rundschau*, 16 April 1933)

21 The new ordering of the philosophical libraries occurred, according to the official news service, in line with the following criteria to put into effect a 'species-specific concept of science':

> (1) text editions, (2) history of philosophy, (3) folk science, (4) the schools of the Jewish-liberalistic dissolution, (5) special areas.

About the fourth main area it is stated that:

> It is divided into two subsections: liberalist philosophy and Jewish-dominated schools. The first includes positivism, south-west German Kantianism, realism, the schools of humanities and criticism, cultural philosophy and culture critique, and existentialism. The second subsection includes Marburg neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, *Lebensphilosophie*, Jewish legal thought, Jewish cultural philosophy, Jewish aestheticism, Jewish mathematics and the relativity theory.

22 Another German publisher (Klostermann, Frankfurt/Main), with whom I had published earlier, has since 1937 no longer paid me royalties on sales and even preferred to ignore book orders to avoid compromising itself any longer with a Jewish author.

23 Soon after the euphoria about the rewon Germany, which on the 21st of March was hardly anywhere as keenly and wholly felt as at German institutes of higher education, a dark shadow descended on them. Besides the profoundly radical changes in their basic constitution, whose details are not as yet sufficiently definite to talk about them, every teacher is naturally concerned about his relations with academic youth. His innermost life, the whole authenticity of his work, depends on this. It grieves me that the students, on having recently obtained rights to accountability, are beginning to assume an attitude to professors which is oddly reminiscent of the attitude Metternich adopted towards students and professors. I am filled with the most acute apprehension

about the strength of the principle of leadership that I ethically highly respect, if neither the rector nor the Minister managed to remove a manifesto which, with the best intention contains a few paragraphs which must give the gravest offence even to the most nationalistic readers. In conjunction with news from other Prussian institutes of higher education, these and similar circumstances evoked in me the feeling that I would probably no longer be able to find access to the new generation. This view was confirmed by the private news I received a few days ago that the Minister had founded a chair and an institute for political pedagogy at the University of Berlin. Since there seems to be no plan that I assist in such highly important work, I have to be convinced that my teaching career is no longer important to the Prussian state. This fills me all the more with the deepest pain because I have, for years of opposition from the Left, yearned for the hour in which I would see an audience on the benches before me that was united with me in the national consciousness, in the love for the state and the Volk. Eduard Spranger. (DAZ, 28 April 1933)

24 The following report, which I received from a relative in spring 1939, also completely fits this description:

> You have to face the fact, again and again, that today we no longer live in the Germany that you left three years ago. Here things have now really come to such a pass that everyone mistrusts everyone else, and one has to be dreadfully careful with every comment one makes even within one's closest circle, because time and again there are people who take pleasure in denouncing others. For example, if someone read this letter I would probably disappear – how and where, nobody would know. I myself cannot join in all that as much as I would often like to, because life would be much easier for me if I did. But we are perhaps already too exhausted by war, inflation, etc., that we can so easily put up with all the crises and problems today. The whole economy and revenues have reached such a point that one hears again and again how people try to evade the laws. It has a terribly demoralizing

effect and we can only be grateful that we do not know what is to come. . . . I would so much like to make it clear to you that all of us are now only numbers here, regardless of whether one is a man or a woman. It is prohibited to step out of line on pain of the death penalty. The police, the Party, the air defence and the NSV, possibly even the military, keep detailed records on us, and we can do nothing but follow the rules. There are no laws in the former sense any more. Although everyone actually earns quite a lot of money nowadays, one can none the less sense a great disinterest in work everywhere. Everyone has the feeling that they are dancing on a volcano – a few, naturally, excepted. . . . We keep making the effort to act in accordance with the law, and are quite prepared to tighten our belts if necessary, but as soon as we see how much of the national wealth is squandered by others, how the shortages of foreign currency and resources do not enter into it, we become embittered. This great lavishness and megalomania is something about which we all grumble. . . . Whether we can hold out is, of course, questionable, and often I think that our turn will come – that of the so-called bourgeoisie – as it was yours before. Many have already suspected it, but we know absolutely nothing, and today it is impossible to say what will happen in a few years' time if one does not know what the next day will bring. Somehow we just have to resign ourselves to it, failing which we might as well immediately buy a rope to hang ourselves.

25 F. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat* (1920); *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921; 2nd edn, Berlin, 1930); *F. Rosenzweigs Briefe* (Berlin, 1935).

26 See in H. Cohen's *Jüdische Schriften*, (Berlin, 1924, Vol. II, p. 237 ff.), the two essays on 'Germanness and Jewishness'.

27 The cited passages are from Rosenzweig's *Briefe* (Letters), pp. 475, 483, 279 f.).

28 *Diary of a Writer* (London: Cassell, 1949), vol. I, pp. 465–8. [German edition: *Tagebuch eines Schriftstellers*, Munich, 1922, vol. III, pp. 15 ff. and 132; vol. IV, pp. 261 f.]

29 See E. Kahler's book by this title (Zurich, 1937).

30 See Dostoevsky's *Politische Schriften* Munich, 1917, pp. 65 ff.; *Diary of a Writer*, vol. II, pp. 727–31. [*Tagebuch eines Schriftstellers*, vol. III, pp. 422 ff.], and about Russia and Germany, p. 821 [p. 489].

# *Curriculum Vitae (1959)*

Two years ago, on the occasion of my sixtieth birthday, Gadamer interpreted my career from the perspective of a contemporary. If today I am to introduce myself from my own point of view, the relatively clear perspective on what one has striven for can emerge only with the progress of time, with a retrospective glance at the internal consistency of chance encounters and the steps following one another, which one calls a life history, with all its circuitous paths.

I owe my first encounter with philosophy and science – which today have diverged so much from each other that philosophy now has a precarious special status both within its own faculty and within the academy of sciences – to my school days: to my Latin teacher H. Poeschel, and my art teacher E. Esenbeck at the science-orientated Munich high school. These two fatherly friends fostered my interest in philosophy. I encountered science in the person of an excellent biology teacher, P. Wimmer, who let us prepare microscope slides, and introduced us to the marvels of the living world. Both philosophical reflection on one's own existence within the whole of the natural world, as it was first imparted to me by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and the less reflective science of living things, induced me to study *philosophy and biology* side by side in Munich and Freiburg after my return from the war and war imprisonment, during which I had much leisure for free contemplation. Philosophy first with A. Pfänder and Moritz Geiger, who stimulated us to develop our own thinking in their lectures; biology with the botanist K. von Goebel, and subsequently in Freiburg with the Nobel Prize winner H. Spemann, who instructed us in experiments in developmental physiology. These two great naturalists have awakened in me the desire for knowledge purely for its own sake – something that has largely been lost in contemporary philosophy.

The disturbances of the Munich Soviet republic banished me to Freiburg, where I enjoyed the strict phenomenological school of Edmund Husserl. I still cannot forget how this great explorer of the inconspicuous continued his expositions with increased composure and confidence in the days when the lecture halls emptied because everyone feared the occupation of Freiburg by French troops. It seemed as if the earnestness of academic research could not be interrupted by anything in the world. His assistant was the junior lecturer Heidegger, who introduced us to Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, but also to Dilthey, Bergson and Simmel. The noticeable intensity and opaque depth of Heidegger's intellectual drive made everything else pale before it, and lured us away from Husserl's naive faith in a conclusive philosophical method.

These first years as a student in Freiburg between 1919 and 1922 were a uniquely rich and fruitful period. Everything that intellectually sustains my generation even today was said at that time – not in spite of but because of the fact that everything was symptomatic of the dissolution, and aiming at a critical renewal. Heidegger's appeal, too, rested upon a productive dismantlement, the 'destruction' of traditional metaphysics, exposing foundations that had become questionable. One such foundation, which *Sein und Zeit* called into question, is the temporal meaning of Being as it was understood by the Greeks, the precondition that only that which always presents itself to us truthfully 'is'. But this traditional understanding of Being could be challenged only because, for Heidegger himself, the decisive temporal horizon for an understanding of human *Dasein* and Being as such is the imminent and future one – and because, in the post-First World War period and since, there is indeed no longer a constant *nunc stans* nor a constant equilibrium in our world, Heidegger's analysis of temporality – and, also, of historicity – became themselves a sign of the times. I have tried to clarify this temporal meaning of *Sein und Zeit* in later years by contrasting Heidegger and Rosenzweig in *M. Heidegger und F. Rosenzweig:, ein Nachtrag zu 'Sein und Zeit'* (1958; English version [M. Heidegger and F. Rosenzweig: A Supplement to 'Being and Time'] 1942), since there is no more temporality without a horizon of eternity than an isolated personal existence without reference to the universe.

In these decisive years after the collapse of 1918, my friendship with P. Gothein confronted me with the choice of either joining the circle around Stefan George and Gundolf, or of becoming the lone follower of Heidegger, who – albeit in a completely different fashion – exercised a no less dictatorial power over young minds, although none of his listeners understood what he was really driving at. During periods of dissolution there are different types of '*Führer*' who resemble each other only in so far as they radically reject what exists and are determined to point a way to 'the one thing that matters'. I decided for Heidegger, and this positive decision also forms the foundation of the critique that I published thirty-five years later under the title *Heidegger: Denker in dürftiger Zeit* (1953), to break the spell of a sterile imitation on the part of his spellbound followers, and to make them conscious of the questionability of Heidegger's existential-historical thought. After obtaining my doctorate (1923) with my thesis on Nietzsche under Moritz Geiger, and at the most critical point of the inflation, I took up a position as private tutor at a Mecklenburg landed estate. In 1924 I followed my teacher to Marburg in order to habilitate under him with a phenomenological thesis on *Das Individuum in der Rolle des Mitmenschen* (The Individual in the Role of Fellow Human Being, 1928). Before that I absented myself to Rome and Florence for a year owing to my aversion to sitting out the time until the academic goal is attained. The personalized world of I and you [*Mitwelt*], in which each is relatively conditioned by the other – as son of one's parents, as husband of one's wife, as friend of one's friends, as student of one's teachers and as teacher of one's students – this *Mitwelt*, also constituting us as 'in-dividuals', appeared at that time to be our definitive world, because it is of direct and everyday concern to us.

The publication of the early writings of Karl Marx (1927) induced me to expand on this all too human horizon of the world, and to include the objective power of the historically developed structure of society in the sphere of my own existence; and therefore to realize, with Marx, that the seemingly independent – because isolated – 'individual' is a member of civil society, a 'bourgeois' in contrast to the self as a citizen. The actual motive for the inclusion of Marx in the history of philosophy – which at that time

was still academically provocative – was not so much the problem of bourgeois society as the 'End of Philosophy after Hegel' proclaimed by Marx, and its transformation into a theoretical critique of what exists for the purpose of practical revolutionary change – that is, the transformation of *philosophy* into Marxism.

The philosophical importance of Marx does not reside primarily in his analysis of the 'self-estrangement' of the human being in a society that produces everything as 'goods', but the fact that he wants to 'abolish' philosophy as such in his dispute with Hegel. As a result of this tendency Marxism is indeed *the* opponent of all preceding philosophical thought. He who wants to 'change' the world – who wants it to be different from what it is – has not yet started to philosophize, and mistakes the world for world *history*, and that for a human creation. My interest in the Left Hegelians' critique of Hegel, which was at the same time a critique of philosophy in general, coincided with Heidegger's descent from the extravagance of the speculative ontology of absolute consciousness to the actual, ultimate and historical *Dasein*. This dual but unanimous interest in Kierkegaard's and Marx's revolt, and in Heidegger's attack on the entire body of traditional metaphysics, which Dilthey had already undermined, corresponded to the topic of my habilitation colloquium on *Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen Philosophie* (Feuerbach and the End of Classical Philosophy). German classical philosophy had indeed reached its ultimate perfection with Hegel.

The first outcome of this preoccuption with Marx's early philosophical writings was a treatise on *Max Weber and Karl Marx* (1932; English translation 1982). It ended inconclusively, because Weber's existential relativism with reference to the free choice of a highest value seemed to me as untenable as the Marxist thesis of the human being as a social species being whose task it is to realize the universal tendency of world history.

In 1919 I had the good fortune to hear Max Weber's Munich lecture on 'Science as a Vocation', and since that day I know what it means to talk about an important person. The sombre concluding words of his lecture still ring in my ears as they did forty years ago. They culminated in the observation that 'for the many who today tarry for new prophets and saviours, the situation is the same as

resounds in the beautiful Edomite Watchman's song of the period of exile that has been included among Isaiah's oracles: "He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come".' Max Weber concluded: 'The people to whom this was said has enquired and tarried more than two millennia, and we are shaken when we realize its fate. From this we want to draw the lesson that nothing is gained by yearning and tarrying alone, and we shall act differently. We shall set to work and meet the "demands of the day".' He was convinced that this demand was plain and simple: 'if each finds and obeys the demon who holds the fibres of his very life' (quoted from H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, eds, *From Max Weber*, 1948, p. 156).

In parallel with this non-Marxist study of Marx, I attempted a critical clarification of the relation between *philosophy and theology* in view of Bultmann's appropriation of Heidegger's 'analysis of *Dasein*'. The element which united them was the impetus they both received from Kierkegaard's thesis that the truth would become truth only once it is subjectively appropriated by an existing being. The pathos of the practical-existential 'decision' that Kierkegaard and Marx had inspired against existing Christianity, and against existing society, gained a new relevance in the 1920s and led to – or tempted – a theological, philosophical and political decisionism. This was the theme of my polemic against the 'Political Decisionism' of Carl Schmitt, which appeared in 1935 under a pseudonym, and an essay on 'The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism', which was published in France in 1946 [in *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946–7: 343–60].

My later work *From Hegel to Nietzsche* was shaped by my preoccupation with Hegel, Marx and Kierkegaard, in which the Left Hegelians took a central position, in contrast to which Nietzsche had a special and marked importance from the days of my youth because he, unlike any other, had anticipated the origin and ascendancy of 'European nihilism' which began anew at the end of the '*fin de siècle*'. He had dared the bold experiment to push the will for nothingness so far that he suddenly had to turn around in an attempt to regain the world after the metaphysical and hyperphysical background world [*Hinterwelt*] had finally become a 'fable' for

him. With this I move ahead to the time of emigration, during which I worked on these themes.

1933 did not require me to make a personal decision. It was forced on me by the now forgotten Nuremberg laws which were made possible in 1935 and immediately enforced. Emigration led me through a series of lucky coincidences, which one likes to call fate, via Rome to a Japanese university. After the German pact with Japan, and under pressure of National Socialist foreign propaganda, my position became insecure. At that time Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr helped me – six months before Pearl Harbor – to obtain a teaching post at an American theological seminary (1941), where I received the offer of a chair at the New School for Social Research in 1949. After eighteen years' absence (1952) I returned to Germany, where I found the conditions at the university oddly unchanged, despite everything that had happened in the interim. It became clear to me only in retrospect how little this emigration to foreign countries with different ways of thinking, how little historical destinies in general, are able to change the character of an adult person, and even that of a nation. It is true that one learns many additional things and can no longer look at what is left of the old Europe with the same eyes, as if one had never been away from it, but one does not become another person; nor does one simply stay the same person – one becomes what one is and can be within one's limits. I first wrote in Rome, in my elaboration of the Marburg lectures, a systematic interpretation of *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkunft des Gleichen* (1935) and a monograph on *Jacob Burckhardt* (1936) and then, in Japan, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche* (1941: *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, 1964), in which I made an attempt to present the crucial events in the nineteenth-century history of ideas in an unconventional manner. This work was greatly assisted by my teaching career in Sendai, where I had the incredible luck of being able to carry on from where I had to leave off in Marburg before an audience of Japanese students.

It is impossible to elucidate fully in a few words how I, despite my sticking to the path taken in Marburg, did not remain untouched by the experience of the no longer Far East, but obtained an unforgettable impression of the country and its people, its subtle civilization and the great Buddhist art, which has been confirmed to

me again during my recent lecture tour of Japan twenty years on. What appeals to a European person is not the advancing modernization of the old Japan, of course, but rather the continuation of the Oriental tradition and the native Shintoistic paganism. In the face of the popular consecration of all natural and everyday things – the sun and the moon, growth and decay, the seasons, the trees, mountains, rivers and stones, of fertility and nourishment, rice planting and housebuilding, of ancestors and the Imperial House – I have for the first time understood something about the religious paganism and political religion of the Greeks and Romans. What is commonly shared is the awe and worship of omnipresent, superhuman powers, called '*Kami*' in Japanese, the Roman '*superi*', which literally mean the same thing – simply the 'superiors' who are above us human beings. This acknowledgement of superhuman powers in the everyday life of human beings corresponds to their natural demeanour in the face of disaster, whether it be caused by earthquakes and typhoons or war and bombs – one of unconditional devotion. They take their own life in general not so very seriously, and sacrifice it with a light heart for reasons that are barely comprehensible to us. This devotion is dwindling to the same extent as the self-confident challenge of Western civilization, in the form of scientific progress and the Marxism it serves, gains power and ground. A Japanese sociologist told me: 'You have brought us scientific technology, but now you should be showing us how we are going to cope with it without losing our self-identity.'

In Japan nobody expects a foreigner to adapt and, therefore, to become Easternized. They want to study the European cast of mind from the European, and I was able to teach in my own language. America, a former European colony, has so far surpassed the old Europe in the things for which the modern world strives that it is now seen as 'the West' *per se*. This is where it was quite impossible to avoid some kind of 'adjustment to the American way of life' if one wanted to be accepted. In particular one is required not only to speak English, but also to learn to think in English, so that one does not constantly translate oneself from German into English after a fashion; here I made the discovery that many famous German books are very badly written and conceived.

Teaching at a Protestant seminary acquainted me with a Christianity that is socially and morally most effective, but as a faith resembles more the belief in progress of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than the creed of the New Testament. Teaching at this theological seminary led me to study the Early Fathers more closely, and this gave rise to my plan of reconsidering the conceptions in the philosophy of history from Vico to Hegel and Marx in the way they were determined by past theologians of history. I was able to trace the guiding principle of progress to a future goal, for which the past serves as preparation, back to the archetypal progress from an Old to a New Testament, and to the teleological scheme of the '*praeparatio Evangelii*' and the '*procursus*' to an eschatological goal. An indirect proof for the origin of the *philosophy* of history in the biblical *theology* of history is the lack of any philosophy of history in Greek thought, which left history to the historians. However, the positive reason for this absence of a construction of a philosophy of history resides in the recognition that there cannot be any real knowledge of the changing destinies, the *tyche*, of history, only a report or an account.

The intention of my book *Meaning in History* (1949), of which a German translation appeared later on (1953) under the more apt title *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*, was a critical one: it sought to demonstrate the impossibility of a *philosophy* of history. This intention was often misinterpreted as a positive Christian one because it seemed to conform to particular tendencies in Protestant theology. I hope I have remedied this misunderstanding through my short book on *Wissen, Glaube und Skepsis* (Knowledge, Faith and Scepticism, 1956), and to be in agreement with the theologians to the extent that the wisdom of this world would pass as a folly in the eyes of God.

I do not want to neglect this opportunity to thank my theological partners and friends at Heidelberg University for the Christian patience with which they have received my not always harmless meddling. Perhaps we are also agreed that the Old and New Testament knows neither a self-moving *nature* and a world ordered by nature, a *cosmos*, nor a *history* in the sense of modern historical consciousness and an existential historicity. The naturalness of nature, *physis*, has been lost through modern physics, and the impartial

view of political history has been blocked by the philosophical theology of history. But in parallel with the theologically determined problematic of the philosophy of history, it should also be shown that the mechanical world image of physics is equally of theological provenance, and cannot be traced back to Greek cosmology. It secularizes the biblical doctrine of creation whose God is no predicate of the cosmos, but a transcendental subject of the world. The view of the divine design of the world that was still the authoritative one for Newton was replaced by a design of human reason which, in Kant and Laplace, made the hypothesis of a divine creator superfluous. Assuming that we know the universal law of gravitation, it is sufficient for Kant to have a piece of matter to show how the world can be 'made'. To be sure, how a mechanical system of the world without life and spirit can bring forth plants, animals and human beings, and with the human being history, remains an irresolvable mystery from the standpoint of Newton's 'science of the world' and a physics without *logos* and *physis*.

However, if we cannot philosophically understand the essence and meaning of history – neither from the point of view of its theological interpretation nor from the no less eschatological scheme of speculative, positivistic and materialist philosophy of history developed by Hegel, Comte and Marx, nor from the existentialization of 'vulgar' history into an individual 'historicity', and still less from the hypostatization of the destiny of history into the universal character *of* Being – then not only does this or that interpretation of history become questionable, but also the concept of a *historical world* that is presupposed in all the interpretations.

The natural world is a world rather than chaos because it is in itself ordered by nature or a cosmos. The so-called historical world is equally then a world only if there is order within it, and we had thus far the continuous (Comte), or even the dialectical (Hegel) and antagonistic (Marx), progress towards perfection as the ordering principle of its temporal progress. All knowledge of history, however, attests to the fact that while people are indeed dependent on a common order in their coexistence, whether it be within the closest or even the widest circle, whose authority and justice is universally acknowledged, none the less, history shows that any such system of laws is of relative duration, is broken, dissolved and

needs to be forever created anew without ever coming to an end at which the progress of history is accomplished. For even if during the progress of a particular epoch one step seems to follow another with some kind of logical consistency, because certain decisions lead to certain consequences, a no less essential momentum in the progress of events is nonetheless the chance of circumstances, the variety of intentions and the scope for arbitrariness.

The idea that everything could also have worked out differently cannot be dismissed. Hegel's intention to eliminate the chance element from the rational and internally necessary course of history cannot succeed, and his logically consistent construction of the philosophy of history as a 'philosophical world history', and similarly of the history of philosophy, is actually written from the viewpoint of factual success. This faith in world history as the law court of the world, because therein the right and rational course is necessarily to be taken, has become as implausible as the preceding faith in divine guidance and providence. The question about the 'meaning' of history, which was already central to my book *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche* (Foreword to the first edition), was then answered in so far as I sought to demonstrate in *Meaning in History* that only in the faith in a salvation history could one find an indirect, and even then a most doubtful, answer; that it had to lead beyond the historical world and the historical way of thinking to the *world as such*, which is the One and Whole existence by nature. But in the face of the world as a whole, the question about meaning in the sense of a 'why?' or purpose becomes senseless because the omnipresent whole of existence by nature, which we call the world, cannot be for something outside itself and in the future. As the whole of existence the world is ever complete and entirely independent, and also the precondition for all dependent existences. Such a wholly dependent existence is, however, precisely what says 'I' of itself, and means itself, and has generated its own historical world on earth. As a human historical world, it is relative to the individual, *his* world, but nothing 'in itself' or of itself. Only the natural world moves and exists of its own accord. No matter how far human beings manage to appropriate nature by cultivating it and extending their domination over it, it will never become our environment, it will always remain itself, just as in

Heidegger's ontological discourse the 'Being' proves itself by 'authentic existence'.

One could say of this world – which is not a world amongst others, and no mere 'idea' (Kant) or 'horizon' (Husserl) and 'projection' (Heidegger), but the one and whole real world – what theology says of God in its proofs of the existence of God: that nothing greater is thinkable beyond it. But nor is it in the least necessary to prove that it exists, because every day and constantly it supplies its own proof, although most of the time we know as little of our world-relatedness as the migratory birds which orientate themselves in their flight by the position of the sun. We cannot exist without the world for one moment, but it can quite easily exist without us. It is also impossible for us to imagine the state of things *before* the world or *after* it, but only a change in its condition within an already ever existing world, unless one postulated an absolute empty nothingness from which nothing can emerge, and which would additionally also be a nothingness of a world.

In line with such considerations I chose *World and World History* as the theme of a presentation at the last German Congress of Philosophy in Marburg (1957), and have also used it as the basis for a series of lectures in Japan (autumn 1958). The 'life history' of my thinking thus seems to be coming to a logically consistent conclusion and, by detour, back to the true philosophical beginnings. It led from an analysis of the closest *Mitwelt* via *the world of civil society* and the *history from Hegel to Nietzsche*, whose 'new interpretation of the world' culminated in the doctrine of 'eternal recurrence', to *world history* in contrast to the history of salvation, and finally to the question of the *world as such*, within which we find the human being and its history. With this for us final, but in itself first question we have ultimately arrived again back at the point where Greek philosophy began, with its writings that are entitled: '*Peri kosmou*', or 'Of the world'. Heraclitus described it as always 'the same' . . . 'for everything and everyone' (Fragments 30), not created by a special God or by any human being.

The question about *God* and the *human being* is thus not eliminated, but indeed included in the whole of existence by nature, which is the cosmos. As a predicate of the whole, and therefore perfect, cosmos, the divine is no personal God above and outside

the world, and the human being is not unique because it is similarly created in the divine image of God, but is, like every living being, a worldly being through which the world has come to speak. But the enigma is all the greater if we consider that the living world was able to bring forth a creature like the human being if the human being neither originates in a supernatural source nor can be traced in an unbroken line back to its animal origins, because its '*nature*' is a *human* one from the beginning. This same enigma also applies to the language unique to the human being, if it neither originates in a divine inspiration nor is derivable from the wordless language of animals. Some kind of leap must have been made in a particular age of the world to bring forth the human being, which chose the unquestionably given world and itself as the theme, and called them into question.

And if, finally, I may return to the occasion of this self-introduction, I cannot help but being conscious of the fact that Husserl, Jaspers and Heidegger belong among the former and present members of the Heidelberg Academy. But, to be sure, those who mention these names and know their works will recall the verses from an ode by Horace in the light of their writings:

> Viler than grandsires, sires beget
> Ourselves, yet baser, soon to curse
> The World with offspring baser yet.
> (Horace, translated by Conington, 1903, London: Bell)

But we may console ourselves for this progressive decline with Kant by making the point that this 'now' of recent times, in which the demise of the world seemed to be nigh, is as old as history itself.

# *Postscript*

I can no longer recall the full details of how and when the particulars of the competition organised by the Widener Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts) came into my husband's hands. We had been living in Japan for more than four years, and neither of us had ever been to the United States of America. Presumably they were sent to him from Harvard, as they were to many other emigrants who had been expelled from Germany by Hitler, for the purpose of collecting materials. We had planned to move the following year to the USA, where a post at the theological seminary in Hartford, Massachusetts was already waiting to be filled by my husband. In view of our move to America, the chance of a prize that would be paid in dollars had considerable attraction for us. Amicable relations with people going as far back as student days in Germany had helped us to get to Sendai, the largest university in Northern Japan. What had significant charm for us in the beginning, due to the beautiful landscape, the foreignness of a non-Christian country and the hospitality of its inhabitants, eventually lost its appeal in the course of the years owing to our complete intellectual isolation. There was only one other European besides us, Kurt Singer, in this medium-sized and totally Japanese city. The remaining foreigners were a number of American teachers, who were employed at the large American high school, with whom we barely came into contact owing to a lack of mutual interests. At the time when Hitler's Germany formed an 'Axis' with Italy and Japan, our life was increasingly made more difficult by the hostility of the 'official' Germans residing in Tokyo, who did everything they could to deprive my husband of his honourable position.

The prospect of meeting Western intellectuals in the United States, possibly even professional colleagues of German origin, was very enticing. My husband immediately got down to writing the report, which was completed under time pressure but sent off in

time to meet the deadline. My husband's habit of keeping a record of his ideas, meetings and daily events in letters and diaries served him well in the writing of the manuscript, and he liked to illustrate these with matching photographs, postcards and newspaper cuttings (a selection of which has been included in the photographic section of this volume). My husband never thought of publishing the report either at that time or later, nor do I recall whether we ever received a reply, and who finally won the competition.

At the end of our stay in Sendai in the year that followed (1941), we were extremely busy with removal arrangements. We secured a passage to San Francisco, again on a Japanese liner. On our arrival in San Francisco, we travelled across the continent to New York by train, and finally set up home in Hartford. My husband had already started learning English during the voyage, since he had to start teaching at the theological seminary almost immediately on our arrival. Thus the language problem was initially the most important thing to attend to.

During the following period at the Hartford theological seminary we acquired American citizenship. After eight years my husband was offered a chair at the New School for Social Research in New York City, and we enjoyed the stimulation provided by the many important people who had come together at this unique gathering-point for Western scholars. At that time neither of us would ever have thought of returning to Germany, although the Second World War had ended in the meantime. But then something wonderful happened which changed our whole view of the world at one stroke. In 1949 my husband was invited to the large International Congress of Philosophy in Mendoza, Argentina. It was the first conference after the war in which German philosophers had also been invited to participate. My husband was immensely delighted. Although not everyone liked to see a new US citizen going to a distant and possibly politically hostile foreign country, he none the less succeeded in getting away for this congress. The prelude was the magnificent flight over the Andes, which was followed by the reunion with old friends and colleagues in Mendoza, several of whom he knew from his student days.

This was followed by an exchange of plans and possibilities between Heidelberg and New York, then the invitation to become

a visiting professor for a semester in Heidelberg, and finally the offer of a chair of philosophy in Heidelberg.

I also made a brief trial visit to my reduced family in the still terribly depressed homeland in 1949. My husband's wish to go to Heidelberg was so obvious that I too could imagine a return to be meaningful. The twenty years from 1953 until his death in 1973 have proved to be an undeniably happy period for both of us.

The so-called Harvard paper, however, remained forgotten until I set eyes on it again when I was tidying up my husband's manuscripts after his death. Impressed on reading this document from so far back, I gave it to several friends to read. Everyone showed such great interest and was so moved by it that their advice strengthened my resolve finally to submit it for publication.

*Ada Löwith*
*Heidelberg, February 1986*

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